

Bernese Anabaptists

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BERNESE ANABAPTISTS

AND THEIR AMERICAN DESCENDANTS

By Delbert L. Gratz

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12

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No. 8

BERNESE ANABAPTISTS
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By Delbert L. Gratz

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By

Delbert L. Gratz

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Preface

A cursory examination of the great volume of printed material that has appeared about various phases of Anabaptist history during the past forty years gives one the first impression that all the important phases in this field have been treated. But this is far from true. The manuscript material in many of the Swiss archives on the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth century Anabaptists has scarcely been touched in terms of getting the full value out of them. The limited ability of American Mennonite scholars to cope with the paleographic and linguistic problems which these manuscripts present, and the few European scholars deeply interested in Anabaptist topics, account for this fact.

The greatest attempt to compile the history of Bernese Anabaptism was made by Ernst Müller, Reformed church minister at Langnau, in his *Geschichte der bernischen Täufer*, published in 1895. Aiding him was Adolf Fluri, teacher at Muristalden teachers' training school in Bern, who continued to publish additional archival findings on the subject for many years. More recently (1931) a committee of Bernese Anabaptists headed by Samuel Geiser, now of Brugg bei Biel, was commissioned by their church conference to compile a volume containing their doctrine and history. Although presented in a more interesting fashion, this volume added little to the research done by Müller and Fluri.

The purpose of the present volume is not to present an English compilation of the works of these Bernese scholars, worth while as that might be. The intention, rather, is to follow the thread of history from earliest times to the present of the group of Bernese Anabaptists that was destined to find their homes in America during the forepart of the nineteenth century. Not fitting into any of the larger migrations which have been studied, very little has appeared in print concerning the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth century history of this group.

This topic has been of utmost interest to me for the past fifteen years, having been raised in a Bernese Anabaptist settlement in America. I express my appreciation to W. A. Amstutz, Bluffton, Ohio, who gave valuable suggestions in the research for the American part of this story. Thanks are also due to many of the older residents of the Anabaptist communities, sons and daughters of the pioneers, for helping to fill in many gaps where the documents of the period were silent. Invaluable aid was given by Christian Lerch and the staff of the Bernese State Archives who placed the Bernese Anabaptist archival material at my disposal.

Also for the guidance given in the preparation of this paper thanks are due to Professor Werner Näf, my adviser at the University of Bern, where this dissertation is being submitted as partial requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Liebefeld, Switzerland
May 31, 1950

DELBERT L. GRATZ

Acknowledgments

I am indebted to The Mennonite Historical Society for including this volume in their series, *Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History*, and particularly to Dr. Harold S. Bender who personally edited this manuscript. I also want to thank the staff of the Mennonite Publishing House which has transformed this study from a typed manuscript into book form.

My sincere thanks go to all those who have helped make this a much better book than it would otherwise have been, but I alone assume the responsibility for its errors and shortcomings. If this little work does nothing more than to stimulate research in the area, make others more aware of their rich spiritual heritage, and strengthen their faith as it has my own, I shall consider my efforts worth while.

Bluffton, Ohio.
December 29, 1952

DELBERT L. GRATZ

Introduction

This book tells a story which is most engrossing to those who are represented by the second half of its title, the American descendants of the original sixteenth-century Anabaptists of the Canton of Bern, Switzerland. It is their history. The blood of the martyrs of faraway Bern flows in their veins, and the names they carry are the names borne by the Anabaptists of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries—in the Emmenthal, in the Jura, in Normanvillars, in Montbéliard, in the Palatinate, and even in Groningen, Holland. The faith which was more precious than life in the sixteenth century, than economic prosperity in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and than native land in the nineteenth century, is still their faith. The twentieth-century American environment of the Mississippi Valley, whether Ohio, Indiana, or Missouri, is vastly different from that of the Swiss mountains and valleys of earlier days, but they, the people, are still Swiss. Their spiritual heritage, though it may be endangered in the modern day in which we live, is still the most precious thing which they possess; and this they owe to all the Bernese Anabaptists who have gone before. They can be assured that in this book they not only have the best account of their history yet written, comprehensive and dependable, but one that will probably never need to be revised by new discoveries, for the painstaking and devoted scholarship of the author has covered the field in a definitive study.

But this book is more than a satisfying account of an ancestral past for modern Swiss Mennonites in America. It is a piece of solid research and writing which measurably enhances our knowledge of the early Bernese Anabaptists, and breaks virgin soil in its account of the time between the sixteenth-seventeenth century period as written by Ernst Müller, and the American part of the story as told by C. Henry Smith. Not only has a troublesome gap in Mennonite history been filled with a wealth of detail, but the American story of the Bernese Swiss immigration and their settlements, although earlier sketched by several writers, is here also filled out. The author has done a good job, and deserves the well-earned thanks of

his Swiss "compatriots" as well as of students of Anabaptist-Men-
nonite history in general.

Goshen, Indiana

January 15, 1953

HAROLD S. BENDER

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Hans Lugibühl family and beehives. Drawing by L. Vogel.
Käfigturm in Bern. Some Anabaptists were imprisoned here during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
Blutturm. Some of the early Anabaptist martyrs were perhaps drowned in the Aare River at the base of the tower.
Erlenbach. Home village of Jacob Amman.
Buchwald (Ferme de la Charne) in the Normanvillars settlement. Former home of the Steiner family that migrated in 1835 to the Chippewa and Putnam settlements in Ohio.
1711 Ordinance of Bern.
Bernese Council House where several debates with the Anabaptists were held during the sixteenth century.
Jeangisboden chapel. Main meetinghouse and school of the Sonnenberg congregation.

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I

The Bernese Anabaptists in the Sixteenth Century

Origin of the Bernese Anabaptists¹

The exact origins of the Anabaptists in the old Bernese state² are not clear. Nor is it likely that the entire story ever shall be known. Various theories have been put forth but documentary proof is nonexistent. During the years 1525 to 1529 one finds manuscripts verifying the existence of Anabaptist groups in most of the lands of the German tongue. They reached from Hesse to Switzerland, and from Alsace to Silesia.

Two theories have been foremost in explaining the beginnings of the Bernese Anabaptists. They are (1) that the Anabaptists arose from the Waldensian movement which had been in Bernese territory since the thirteenth century, and (2) that the movement was carried to Bern from Zurich.

Theory of Waldensian Descent

In the year 1277 heretics were found in Schwarzenburg.³ The Bishop of Lausanne ordered the Dominicans, the heretic judges of

¹ The term "Anabaptist" is used in this study as a translation of the terms *Täufer* and *Wiedertäufer*. The designation *Brüder* was the only name used by the Anabaptists in reference to themselves for many years after their inception. Finally they halfheartedly adopted the names originally given them by their enemies, preferring later the term *Taufgesinnte*. The group that remained in Switzerland officially adopted the name *Altevangeltische Taufgesinnten-Gemeinde der Schweiz* in 1894. Today they are commonly known as *Alttäufer* to differentiate them from the *Neutäufer* (*Gemeinschaft der Taufgesinnten*), a group that broke away from the original body in 1832. Those going to Germany soon adopted the name *Menmoniten*. In America the name *Swiss Menmonite* is usually given to the groups that have settled there during the nineteenth century.

² For several centuries Bern was organized as a city-state. The government was most commonly referred to as the *Stadt Bern*. During the seventeenth century and afterward it was also referred to as *Republik Bern*. It was also called the *Stand Bern* (State of Bern) in certain circumstances. The use of the term *canton* in connection with the Bernese government and territory does not appear until the middle of the eighteenth century, and was not in common use until after the beginning of the nineteenth century. In this study the term *state* will be used. For all practical purposes Bern (like the other states in the Swiss Confederacy) had a sovereign government. The *Tagsatzung* (federal parliament of the Swiss Confederacy) had little power to legislate and practically no executive power.

³ At that time the Herrschaft Schwarzenburg belonged to Savoy. In 1423 it came under the joint rule of the states of Bern and Freiburg. This arrangement of government remained in effect until the French Revolution.

the time, to seek them out. Brother Humbert, the Dominican convent preacher in Bern, had them burned at Bern. About 100 years later it is reported that a heretic named Löffler from Bremgarten was brought to Bern, tried, and burned. In 1399 over 130 Waldenses were found in Bernese territory. They were both men and women, rich and poor and persons of high esteem. Through the persuasion of Brother Hans von Landau, a Dominican, and other learned men, the Waldenses took an oath renouncing their heretical ideas. As it was their first offense they were not burned as was the customary treatment for heretics. Rather, they were fined the immense sum of 3,000 florins (\$150,000).⁴ During the same year a meeting was held by Bernese and Freiburg authorities at Wünnewil, a village located between the two cities, to decide how to handle the growing number of Waldenses in their lands. A committee of investigation was established with the Dominicans of Lausanne in charge. They started their inquisition on December 3, 1399. The governments of Bern and Freiburg favored a milder policy than the Dominican inquisitors. During this time 13 Waldenses were found. In their hearings they professed various beliefs which included:

- (1) non-belief in the power of the church authorities to forgive sin,
- (2) giving honor or praying to the saints or Mary is of no avail,
- (3) working on Sunday or holy days is no sin,
- (4) non-belief in purgatory,
- (5) offering prayers or saying mass is of no aid to the dead,
- (6) priests or holy men who take offerings are not helping the welfare of the soul,
- (7) holy water does not forgive sins,
- (8) penitence by another avails nothing,
- (9) when a person dies he may be buried anywhere, not necessarily in a cemetery that has been blessed,
- (10) needless use of God's name is a sin of death,
- (11) ministers should be at least 34 years of age,

⁴ The currencies of the time are translated here into United States dollars. The basis for the comparisons is the cost of staple foods.

(12) the aim is to keep the same faith regardless of growth in numbers.⁵

These beliefs reflect more closely the spirit of the reformers than the early Anabaptist confessions of faith. While not contrary to Anabaptist doctrine there is a noticeable omission of such cardinal points as nonresistance, non-swearing of oaths, nonconformity to the world, and believers' baptism.

It is easily understandable that there were Waldenses in this region as it lay en route from Italy to Germany where important centers of the Waldensian faith were located.

In 1429 a trial was held in Freiburg at which time the fact was revealed that Schwarzenburg had many Waldenses and that they had connection with their brethren in Solothurn, Germany, and Bohemia.⁶

In 1430 Waldensian ministers came to Freiburg from Germany and Moravia for the purpose of strengthening the Waldensian communities there. This is the last account of Waldenses in the vicinity of Bern.

Innocent VIII included Switzerland in a Papal Bull of April 25, 1487, as a place in which Waldensians should be exterminated.⁷

Let us then examine the facts concerning a possible Waldensian-Anabaptist connection in the Bernese area. First, it is to be noted that there are no records that Waldenses existed in Bernese territory at the time of the Reformation. This does not prove, however, that there were none there at that time. There are periods in Bernese Anabaptist history where the records are silent for a number of years, although we know that the group was still in existence.⁸ The Emmental Anabaptists in the middle decades of the eighteenth century are an example of this point. In pre-Reformation times records were kept even more rarely than during the time following the Reformation. Records concerning pre-Reformation Waldenses only exist when an inquisition against them was in

⁵ [Bernhard Rudolf] Fetscherin, Dr., "Beitrag zur Geschichte der Waldenser," *Abhandlungen des Historischen Vereins des Kantons Bern*, II, No. 2, 335-42. This is a summary, not a verbatim translation.

⁶ Ochsenbein, Gottlieb Friederich, *Aus dem Schweizerischen Volksleben des XV. Jahrhundert* (Bern, 1881), 150.

⁷ Müller, Ernst, *Geschichte der bernischen Täufer* (Frauenfeld, 1895), 65.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 67.

Felix Manz of Zurich who had also had university training and could handle the ancient languages very well. In 1524 they formally broke with Zwingli. In January, 1525, Grebel, Manz, and others came together near Zurich where they effected an organization.¹⁷ It was not until the following Easter that Roman Catholicism was abolished and Zwingli's Reformed state church actually came into existence at Zurich.

At a little later time than the Anabaptists were organizing in Zurich we have evidence that there were Anabaptists in existence in Bern. A letter written at the end of 1525 or beginning of 1526 by Heinrich Bullinger, a leading reformer at Zurich, to Heinrich Simler at Bern mentions that Anabaptist teaching exists in Bern.¹⁸

The first record we have of Anabaptist leaders from the Zurich group having contact with the Bernese Anabaptists was on January 22, 1528, when Jörg of the House of Jakob (familiarily known as Blaurock) from Chur in the Grisons participated in a debate at Bern. (See page 16 below.) The Bernese had had a number of earlier contacts with Anabaptists from other areas in Switzerland. Most of these were from Basel, and Aarau.

Bern remained officially Catholic until February 7, 1528, when through the efforts of Berchtold Haller it espoused the Zwinglian Reformed state-church religion.¹⁹ But the Bernese council had already dealt with Anabaptist matters while the state was still Catholic. On January 13, 1526, a woman from Zofingen was accused of having herself and her children rebaptized.²⁰ This predates any known contact of Bernese with non-Bernese Anabaptists. Only two weeks later (January 26), Hans Pfistermeyer from Aarau was dealt with for his Anabaptist beliefs.²¹

It should be mentioned, however, that the leading speakers of the early Anabaptist debates in Bern were from non-Bernese territory, indicating that the Bernese Anabaptists had previous contacts with them and that they looked up to these foreign leaders as also their predecessors in the faith.

¹⁷ Horsch, John, *Mennonites in Europe*, 50.

¹⁸ Simler, Johann Jakob, *Samlung Alter und neuer Urkunden*, II Erster Theil (Zurich, 1759) 90-92. Original at Zurich, Stadtbibliothek.

¹⁹ Theodor de Quervain, *Kirchliche und soziale Zustände in Bern unmittelbar nach der Einführung der Reformation (1528-1536)*, (Bern, 1906), 185. Here is given a reprint of the original reform mandate.

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⁷ Müller, Ernst, *Geschichte der bernischen Täufer* (Frauenfeld, 1895), 65.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 67.

progress. This only occurred when a bishop found that such action would be to his praise. But often it was to his benefit not to bring such matters to light. In such a place as the state of Bern the people were never disposed to see their peaceful neighbors punished even though they differed in religious thinking.⁹ The very existence of the Anabaptists in the Emmental during certain most difficult times of persecution is due to this fact. One can well imagine that the same took place among the Waldenses although no chronicle or other written indication for or against this idea has been preserved to prove or disprove it.

Second, the Anabaptists' vast knowledge of the Bible was not gained through the preaching of the ministry. They resembled, rather, the traveling Waldensian minister who often knew the greater share of the New Testament from memory.¹⁰

Third, the Reformed ministers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries could not understand why Anabaptist ideas could not be completely eradicated. They treated it as a passing fancy of the people, but it showed itself more as an age-old religion that was deeply imbedded in the hard heads and true hearts of the Emmental farmers.

Fourth, the idea of Waldensian descent has been handed down by word of mouth as well as in writing through the Anabaptists themselves. The modern Mennonites in Canton Bern hold to this theory although they have had little contact with literature that would have taught them this. It is the story of their origin that has been told by parents to their children for generations.¹¹ Thieleman Jansz van Braght, Mennonite minister in Holland during the seventeenth century, in his memorial work entitled *Martyrs' Mirror* (1660) holds to this theory.¹² He was quite close to the events, having compiled and written this work only a little over a hundred years after the Reformation. Although the accuracy of his work has long been questioned, it is gaining more repute in the present day as being an understatement of the facts rather than an exaggeration.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Interview with Hans Rüfenacht, present leading minister of the Emmental Taufgesinnten Gemeinde, Kehr bei Langnau.

¹² Braght, Thieleman Jansz van, *Martyrs' Mirror* (Scottdale, Pa., 1950), 284-87.

Fifth, Ernst Müller (1849-1927), Reformed pastor of Langnau, made the most thorough study to date of the problem.¹³ Not only did he investigate the written evidence, which is too scanty to prove the matter one way or the other, but has brought into his study the more intangible sociological and psychological factors which only a person closely acquainted with the Bernese mind could do. He was convinced that the Bernese Anabaptists have pre-Reformation roots which strongly indicate Waldensian connections.

Sixth, one of the areas in which Waldenses were found in 1430 was also the scene of Anabaptist activity just a century later. This was Schwarzenburg.¹⁴

It might well be asked why there was no connection between the Anabaptists and the Waldenses after the Reformation. Most of the large group in the Piedmont joined the Reformation in 1532 and lost their identity as Waldenses. In this way they estranged themselves from their brethren in other areas. Those Waldenses who did not join in the Reformation were persecuted and struggled for their existence just as the Anabaptists did in Bern. Neither had much time to think of aiding the other.¹⁵

Theory of Anabaptism Spreading from Zurich to Bern

During the last half century the theory has taken root especially among American Mennonite historians that Swiss Anabaptism originated in Zurich and was carried to Bern and other areas within the Swiss Confederacy from that place.¹⁶ Those who uphold this theory trace the origin of all Swiss and South German Anabaptism to Conrad Grebel and the small group of men at Zurich who worked with Zwingli in the Reformation until they parted ways because of disagreement on certain points of doctrine as infant baptism, church and state relationship, and participation in war.

Conrad Grebel, the leader of the Zurich group of Anabaptists, was a young man in his mid-twenties who had just completed his university training. Another prominent man in the movement was

¹³ Müller, *op. cit.*, 52-69.

¹⁴ Ochsenbein, *op. cit.*, 279.

¹⁵ Müller, *op. cit.*, 68.

¹⁶ Main exponents of this theory have been C. Henry Smith, John Horsch, Richard Feller, and John C. Wenger.

Felix Manz of Zurich who had also had university training and could handle the ancient languages very well. In 1524 they formally broke with Zwingli. In January, 1525, Grebel, Manz, and others came together near Zurich where they effected an organization.¹⁷ It was not until the following Easter that Roman Catholicism was abolished and Zwingli's Reformed state church actually came into existence at Zurich.

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¹⁹ Theodor de Quervain, *Kirchliche und soziale Zustände in Bern unmittelbar nach der Einführung der Reformation (1528-1536)*, (Bern, 1906), 185. Here is given a reprint of the original reform mandate.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 120.

²¹ *Ibid.*

There is no contradiction in the beliefs or practices of the Zurich and Bernese Anabaptists that can be pointed out. The early confessions of faith and church rules found in Bern, in fact, appear to have come from eastern Switzerland.

The family names of the Bernese Waldenses do not correspond with those of the earliest known Bernese Anabaptists. Only the names of Studer, Neukomm, and Suter among the Waldenses smack of later Anabaptist family names.²² But family names can not be relied on to trace Bernese Anabaptism from its beginnings to the present. The few Anabaptist family names that existed immediately after the Reformation which still exist usually only indicate a similarity in region, rarely of direct descent.

It appears then that the antecedents of Bernese Anabaptism go farther back than Reformation times, as does not seem to be the case with Anabaptist history in Zurich. It may well be concluded that there were two strains of Anabaptism in existence during the Reformation period in Bernese territory, the one located in the cities of Bern, Biel, and Aarau and being nourished (and perhaps founded) by Anabaptists from other Swiss cities as Basel and Zurich, and the other movement of a much older origin in the more secluded rural areas in the state of Bern. It was the latter strain that survived two centuries of persecution and has lived on to the present day.²³

Development of the Anabaptist Movement

As has already been mentioned, the first written evidence of Anabaptists in Bernese territory that has come down to the present day is a letter written toward the end of 1525 or the beginning of 1526 by Heinrich Bullinger, at the time a minister at the Kappel Monastery, to Heinrich Simler at Bern. In this letter Bullinger mentioned that he had heard that Anabaptist teaching was being carried on in Bern and he expressed the hope that Simler would not fall into their company. On November 29, 1525, Berchtold Haller wrote to Zwingli concerning the growth of Anabaptism in Bern. He expressed fear that Zwingli's brother-in-law, Lienhard Trempp, would become engrossed in these beliefs.²⁴

²² Ochsenbein, *op. cit.*, 180-83.

²³ Theory advanced by Christian Lerch, Assistant Archivist, Bernese State Archives.

²⁴ Berchtold Haller to Zwingli, Nov. 29, 1525, in *Zwingli's Briefwechsel*, II, 441 (*Huldreich Zwingli's Werke*, Band VIII), Leipzig, 1914.

The Bernese Council first dealt with the Anabaptists on January 13, 1526, when a woman from Zofingen and her children were brought before the council for having been rebaptized. Upon the agreement that she would renounce her rebaptism she was released from her sentence of banishment. Just about two weeks later (January 26) Hans Pfistermeyer from Aarau was banished for his Anabaptist beliefs. The same punishment was meted out to Agnes Zender of Aarau on March 17. At Brugg Jakob Gross from Waldshut was imprisoned about the same time. He was accused of having spoken slanderously about Zwingli and Leo Jud.²⁵

During the following year there was a definite growth in the number of Anabaptists in Bern. This was due in part to the number that came from Basel. Hans Hansmann (called Seckler because his occupation was that of wallet-maker) and Jakob Hochrütiner, both from Basel, came to Bern. Berchtold Haller, the Bernese Reformer, estimated the number of Anabaptists in the city of Bern to be about twenty on April 25, 1527. At this time Hansmann and Hochrütiner were tried.²⁶ They were put in a pillory and later led out of the land.²⁷ On August 14 the cities of Zurich, St. Gall, and Bern together issued a mandate against the Anabaptists.²⁸ This was the beginning of the systematic punishment and attempt at extermination of the Anabaptists by the government of Bern. The ministers were at first in favor of holding open debates with the Anabaptists to prove their errors to a large number of people rather than bring ignominy on themselves by punishing without a trial. A debate was held on January 22, 1528.²⁹ This did not seem to aid the purpose of the church officials; so more drastic measures were resorted to, namely, that of capital punishment. Sometime between July 8 and 15, 1529, the first death sentences to Anabaptists in the state of Bern were carried out. Hans Hansmann (called Seckler), Hans Dreier (also written Treyer), and Heini Seiler were drowned at Bern.³⁰ Others were exiled at this time.³¹

²⁵ de Quervain, 120, 128.

²⁶ Staatsarchiv Bern. *Unnütze Papiere* 80/1. This series is hereafter referred to as U.P.

²⁷ Staatsarchiv Bern. *Ratsmanuale*, April 29 and May 1, 1527. This series is later indicated in this study as R.M.

²⁸ de Quervain, *op. cit.*, 242-3. Copy of the mandate.

²⁹ L(eo) v(on) M(uralt), "Das Gespräch mit den Wiedertäufern am 22. Januar 1528 zu Bern." *Zwingliana*, V, No. 9 (1933 No. 1), 409-13.

³⁰ Supposedly near the northwest base of the old Nydegg bridge in the Aar River. The area of the Bluturm (still standing) has also been suggested.

³¹ de Quervain, *op. cit.*, 121.

In January, 1530, word came to the ears of the Bernese officials that some Anabaptists were coming to Bernese and Solothurn territory from Basel in order to spread their faith. Orders went out to all the prefectures to be on the lookout for these persons.³² Several were caught. They were Uly Merckly from Rotenfluh, Heini Flügbach from Landberg, Hans Heiden from Niederdorf, and Claus Schwyzer from Liestal.³³ Since Basel was not included in the 1527 agreement against the Anabaptists Bern could not punish them. A long trial lasted from January to November; they were finally released after being given the warning that they would be executed if they returned.³⁴

A great problem for the Bernese authorities was the attitude of neighboring governments that would not co-operate in the struggle against Anabaptism. Especially was this true of Solothurn. The Anabaptist center there was at Erlinsbach, just across the border. After a very sharp request from Bern, Solothurn agreed to give aid but forbade Bernese police to cross into Solothurn territory.³⁴

The method of debating was again tried in July, 1532, in order to prove the errors of the Anabaptists publicly and thus diminish their popularity. This, however, did not prove to be the case as during the next decade the numbers of Anabaptists grew considerably.³⁵

In April, 1533, a new policy was introduced by Bern. It was a kind of compromise allowing the Anabaptists protection if they would at least outwardly obey the church ordinances. Anabaptist matters were to a large extent turned over to the prefectures at this time. The big drive was after the ringleaders and ministers of the group. Rather than banish them it was decided that imprisonment should be their sentence. But this did not turn out to be a solution to their problem. Haller wrote to Bucer, "The Anabaptist leader impresses us as being more obstinate and headstrong than learned and meek. Since they have started to imprison them, the jails are filled It was decided by the council to dunk³⁶ all of them, but we were against this. The best and the simplest is advocated by them.

³² Staatsarchiv Bern. *Deutsch-Missivbuch* R 467, Jan. 10, 1530. This series is later referred to as T. Miss.

³³ R.M. 224, 193.

³⁴ Müller, *op. cit.*, 32. ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 36.

³⁶ Method of punishment whereby the prisoner's head is inundated until life is nearly extinct, then revived.

Therefore, no one of us wants to stain our religion with blood."⁸⁷ More humaneness was also shown at this time. The sick, the pregnant, and mothers with small children, were admonished and then left in peace.⁸⁸

The policy again changed on March 5, 1535, when the order was issued that the prefects should be more strict. If the Anabaptist prisoner would not swear to give up his faith within eight days he was to be exiled. If he returned he was to be judged immediately. The men were to be executed by the sword and the women drowned.⁸⁹ Then followed the most severe times that the Bernese Anabaptists knew. Special police were sent by the Bernese government and also by the local governments to seek out Anabaptists. For each one that they caught they received one pound (\$15). If they failed to bring back any captives they were paid something for their efforts. It is not known how many were caught in this manner as not all were brought to Bern and the prefectural records in most cases are no longer extant. Neither is it known how many renounced their faith and were thus released. From a study made of existing records it was found that during the years 1534 to 1540 some 158 were imprisoned, 109 were banished, and 20 were executed. But it is obvious that there were many more. They could not be extirpated in this way because those who dwelt near the border would slip over into the neighboring state until conditions became more settled when they would return until another gloomy day came. Then they would repeat their journey into voluntary exile. This wave of terror only made the Anabaptists more fearless. More definite stands were taken on their faith than ever before. These actions of the state against the Anabaptists found little favor among the people, especially those who had friends among them.⁴⁰

The last debate to be held with the Anabaptists in Bern was from March 11 to 17, 1538. It resembled closely the other debates. A few months later the council complained that despite the debate the Anabaptists' numbers continued to increase.⁴¹

⁸⁷ de Quervain, *op. cit.*, 139-40.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 141-2.

⁸⁹ R.M. 251, 29. March 1, 1535.

⁴⁰ de Quervain, *op. cit.*, 142-7.

⁴¹ (Samuel Geiser, ed.) *Die Taufgesinnten-Gemeinden*, 180. For a detailed account of this great debate see Jan P. Matthijssen, "The Bern Disputation of 1538" in *MQR*, XXII (January, 1948), 19-33.

Hans Franz Nägeli, one of the highest governmental officials of Bern, brought a breathing spell for the Anabaptists. He was sent by the Bernese government to France in 1536 for the purpose of persuading King Francis I to cease persecuting the Huguenots. Through this experience he received a broader view of religious toleration than his colleagues in the Bernese council. On November 28, 1541, he made a speech in the council, the type of which they were not accustomed to hear. Because of this the secretary recorded it in Latin. He spoke at great length on the origin and growth of the Anabaptists in Bernese territory. He pointed out that the main reason for their growth lay in the state clergy itself whose indifference, wicked conduct, and impudence caused persons to turn away from the state church. The same day that he gave his speech a milder interpretation of the earlier mandate was issued.⁴²

The influence of Nägeli was short-lived, for already the following May another Anabaptist was forced to forfeit his life because of his faith and by September, 1543, at least two more suffered the same punishment.⁴³

In 1551 the area from Münsingen and Grosshöchstetten through the entire Emmenthal had a decided growth in the number of Anabaptists. From the pulpits in the prefectures of Signau, Trachselwald, and Brandis an open letter was read stating that each Anabaptist caught would be fined ten pounds (\$140), and if they did not renounce their faith, they would be punished by taking their life and possessions. Those who shelter them would be expelled from their homes.⁴⁴

The Anabaptist problem again received attention in 1566, when it was decreed that the brethren were to be banished from Bern and forced to take an oath never to return. Those who broke this oath were to be executed.⁴⁵ Representatives were sent by the Bernese government to each of the communes where Anabaptists were known to live, and a thorough house-to-house search was made. All were asked whether they would obey their government and take the oath of allegiance to it; if they refused they were exiled. This

⁴² R.M., no. 273, 161-3. Nov. 28, 1541. Staatsarchiv Bern *Mandatenbuch*, Nov. 28, 1541. Hereafter referred to as M.B.

⁴³ de Quervain, *op. cit.*, 149.

⁴⁴ R.M., no. 364, 79. Feb. 16, 1564.

⁴⁵ R.M., no. 369, 34. April 28, 1566. R.M., no. 369, 106. May 27, 1566.

did not get rid of all but did keep those who remained very quiet. In October this process ceased.⁴⁶

A law passed in 1567 declared that persons who were not married by the state church would be considered as living in adultery and would be expelled from the land. Their children were to be considered illegitimate and thus prohibited from inheriting estates left by their parents or relatives.⁴⁷

Some twelve years later a mandate much resembling those of the past was issued against the Anabaptists.⁴⁸

In 1581 the council reminded themselves of the arguments of the late Hans Franz Nägeli that they should not always try to find fault with the Anabaptists but rather look at their own corruption, especially that within the state church. The proceedings of this meeting give one a picture of the corruption against which the Anabaptists complained. They deplored the unlearned, uncalled ministers who bought themselves into the clergy, as well as the open sins of the ministry. The council was also reminded that not only the ministry was guilty of great sins but also the government officials. The result was a new mandate which differed from the others in that it suggested the treatment for staunch Anabaptists should be a term of life imprisonment with little food, or a sentence to the Venetian galleys as oarsmen rather than execution. They said they noticed that the people seeing the executions of Anabaptists had great pity and compassion on them. It was mentioned that the Tertullian saying that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church" seemed to apply to these heretics.⁴⁹

On September 3, 1585, another mandate was issued admitting that the former mandates did not seem to achieve their purpose in doing away with Anabaptist teachings since the Anabaptists continue to gain numerically. The reason was the evil character of the state clergy, according to the mandate. As in past mandates it was stated that Anabaptists should be banished, those who return should be executed without trial, foreign ministers and leaders should be put on the rack and banished after confessions were exacted from them.⁵⁰ In actuality the death penalty was not used after 1571

⁴⁶ R.M., no. 370, 58-59. Oct. 5, 1566.

⁴⁷ T. Miss., no. EE, P. 427-432. March 17, 1567.

⁴⁸ R.M., no. 398, 369-72. Dec. 30, 1579.

⁴⁹ Müller, *op. cit.*, 84-87. ⁵⁰ M.B., no. 2, 77-82.

when Hans Haslibacher was beheaded as the last martyr in Bern. (See p. 24 below.)

Migrations of the Bernese Anabaptists in the Sixteenth Century

The question arises as to just what happened to the many Bernese Anabaptists who were driven out of the land during the sixteenth century. A large percentage returned against their oath. At the best they lived hunted lives, but many were at last captured and imprisoned and in rare cases executed. Others fled to other Germanic areas where they were allowed to live quietly. The chief place of refuge during this time was Moravia, where a community had been established by refugees from the west as early as 1526 under the protection of the ruler, Leonhard von Liechtenstein, who in the course of time was himself rebaptized and joined the Anabaptists. Some of the Swiss Anabaptists who went there for protection could not agree with the discipline of the church nor with the lack of the belief in the full nonresistant principle (Hubmaier, the leader, permitted the use of the sword under certain circumstances) so decided to hold their own meetings. Leonard von Liechtenstein told them that they must leave if they would not agree to be part of the older body. The Lords von Kaunitz invited them to come to Austerlitz where they had already given refuge to the exiled Hussites for some eighteen years. Because of their lack of property they pooled their goods and started practicing Christian communism in 1528. Jacob Hutter, an Anabaptist from the Tyrol, became the leader of the group in 1533. Through his efforts strict discipline was established, and the group came to be called after his name, Hutterian brethren.⁵¹

In 1573 and 1576 missionaries from the Hutterian brethren came to Bern to "gather sheep."⁵² How many left under this influence one cannot tell but it did create enough unrest to receive attention from the government. A directive to hinder the migration was the result. Those leaving would lose their citizenship and would never be accepted in the land again. The persons coming from Moravia were to be imprisoned. Two of the Moravian repre-

⁵¹ Horsch, *op. cit.*, 149-50.

⁵² Dr. Josef Beck, *Die Geschichtsbücher der Wiedertäufer in Oesterreich-Ungarn* (Vienna, 1883), 39.

sentatives were caught at Zurzach. They were brought to Baden and after a short trial were drowned.⁵³

It appears that the missionaries had success in their enterprise although it was a dangerous one. In a chronicle it is recorded that in 1585 so many Anabaptists arrived in Moravia from Switzerland that they could not accept them all into their communities immediately. In 1586 many more went to Moravia, according to the record.⁵⁴

Records do not exist listing the names or even the numbers of those who left the Bernese state for Moravia. But the names appearing in the Moravian Anabaptist records include the following of Bernese origin: Gerber, Schenk, Hofer, Schlüchter, Born, Amsler, and Baumann.⁵⁵

The history of this group is a long and involved one of migrations and persecutions. From Moravia they moved to Hungary, then on to southern Russia and in 1874 to South Dakota. After the first World War most of them moved to Manitoba and Alberta in Canada because of the severe treatment they received at the hands of local South Dakota authorities for not participating in the war effort. There they continue to follow their form of Christian communism established over 400 years ago.⁵⁶

⁵³ Müller, *op. cit.*, 96.

⁵⁴ Beck, *op. cit.*

⁵⁵ Beck, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

⁵⁶ John Horsch, *The Hutterian Brethren*, *passim*.

II

Debates and Early Persecution

Debates

The early history of many of the Anabaptist groups in Europe was marked by a series of debates with state church officials. This was particularly true in Bern where five such public disputations were held during the third and fourth decades of the sixteenth century. Although they followed a pattern of correct legal procedure they could not be conducted in an impartial manner because the accuser was also the judge. Regardless of how ludicrous the Anabaptists made the state church accusers appear there was no chance for winning a decision. But the effect of these disputations was on the whole much more favorable for the Anabaptist movement than for the accusers. The people attending were often profoundly impressed by the simplicity and sincerity of the Biblical Christianity expounded by the Anabaptists and the inability of the arrogant clergy to dispute their beliefs in a logical manner. When the state church finally realized that more harm was being done for their cause than good the debates ceased.

The first debate with the Bernese Anabaptists took place on May 21, 1527. Anabaptists who attended were Bernhardt Sager from Bremgarten, Thomas Schmalzer from Murstadt in Franconia (Germany), Hans Hansmann (called Seckler) from Basel, Hans Meyer (called Pfister Meyer) from Aarau, Heini Seiler from Aarau, Hans Töblinger from Fribourg in Uechtland, Ulrich Ueller from Brunnen, Jörg of the House of Jacob (Blaurock) from Chur, and Ulrich Honger from Bern. According to Berchtold Haller the Anabaptists were convinced of their errors through public debate and recanted.¹ However, this cannot be true because some, like Blaurock, were executed elsewhere for their faith later on, and several took part in the next debate in Bern.

Church and state officials of Bern held a debate beginning January 7, 1528, which lasted until January 26. At this time it was

¹ U.P., 80, 1.

decided that the church would officially break with Roman Catholicism and become closely allied with the state after Zwingli's pattern in Zurich. Events had been drawing the church at Bern progressively away from Roman Catholic authorities for the five years preceding the actual reform mandate which was put into effect on February 7, 1528.² The leading reformer of Bern was Berchtold Haller, minister at the Bern Minster Church. Haller kept in close contact with Zwingli's reform in Zurich, upon which his own work was closely patterned. At the January, 1528, debate everyone was to be given a chance to speak his mind freely as to his convictions on the Reformation. Eight Anabaptists attended. The leaders among them were Jörg of the House of Jacob (called Blaurock) from Chur, Hans Hansmann (called Seckler) from Basel, Hans Pfistermeyer and Heini Seiler from Aarau. Instead of being given a voice in the proceedings they were imprisoned. On Wednesday, January 22, a recess was held from the Catholic-Reformed debate while Zwingli and others dealt with the Anabaptists. After admonishing the Anabaptists they were told that if they would be caught in Bernese territory again they would be drowned without mercy. That the authorities were in earnest can not be doubted as Hans Hansmann (Seckler), Hans Dreier (Treyer), and Heini Seiler were drowned a short time later when they were found in another portion of the state of Bern propagandizing their views.³

Hans Pfistermeyer was the main leader of the Bernese Anabaptists by 1530. The Bernese government ordered his arrest. On March 24, 1531, he was arrested through the efforts of Hans Rudolf Segesser at Mellingen and taken to Bern. A debate was held with him by the state church ministers Berchtold Haller, Kaspar Megander, Franz Kolb, Sebastian Hofmeister, and Jakob Otherus. The oath, rebaptism, and other points of difference were discussed. Pfistermeyer declared himself defeated and recanted at this time. But he did not aid in combating the Anabaptists as the authorities had hoped. The results of the debate were printed and greatly publicized.⁴

² de Quervain, *op. cit.*, 185-93. Reprint of the reform mandate.

³ Geiser, *op. cit.*, 170-71.

⁴ *Ein christenlich gespräch gehalten zu Bern zwischen den Predicanten und Hansen Pfyster Meyer von Arouw den Widertauß, Eyd, Oberkeyt und andere Widertöufferische Artickel betreffende* (April 19, 1531). Copy in Goshen College Library.

The various harsh mandates passed against the Anabaptists did not have the effects that were expected. It took many years before the Bernese government came to realize they were dealing with a religious movement and not a crime wave that could be put down with police power. On May 30, 1532, it was agreed by the council to call a meeting at Zofingen with the Anabaptists in July at which time the Bernese authorities would debate against them. Zofingen was chosen instead of Bern to avoid the fear the Anabaptists might have gotten from the injustice done their leaders just four years before when they were imprisoned during the reform debate after having been promised no harm. They were promised safe-conduct to and from Zofingen. Though suspicious of this promise some 23 Anabaptists attended. The leaders were Christian Brügger from Rohrbach and Martin Weniger (called Lincki). Other Anabaptist leaders attending were Hans Hotz, Simon Lantz, and Michael Utt. Brügger was permitted to leave prison to attend the debate. On the state church side the main speaker was Berchtold Haller. With him were Kaspar Megander, Sebastian Hofmeister from Schaffhausen, Sulzer from Basel, Heinrich Möricker, and others. Haller referred to Weniger as "a learned and crafty man, an eloquent and astounding hypocrite, remarkably gifted at deceiving." The debate lasted from July 1 until July 9. The discussions brought out the beliefs of the Anabaptists. The authority of ordaining ministers was discussed. The state church declared that only the civil authorities could give consent to ordain. The Anabaptists asserted that it is the duty of the Christian church to choose and ordain ministers who qualify. Then the state-church representatives tried to prove that the Anabaptists were not a church but a seditious group. The Anabaptists replied that their theory is that the true church is one in which the members show by their words and actions that they are subject to Christ. A true church, they said, can not be identified with the worldly state nor compel anyone to join. The Anabaptists also stressed the importance of church discipline. The state-church representatives admitted that corruption existed in their churches, but said it was the duty of the civil government to take care of such matters since it was also Christian. Other topics discussed were the oath and the Christians' responsibilities to civil government. The Anabaptists

also disapproved of serfdom. A report of the debate was published and ordered to be read from the pulpits of all churches within Bernese territory.⁵ It is reported that many of the people who attended the debate believed that the state church had been shown to be in error. After the debate the Anabaptists were permitted to send a representative to Aarau where the final decision was announced. The person who went was Brügger who was told that he would have the choice of leaving the Anabaptists or being banished if he remained with them. He chose to leave the area but in the course of time was again found in the state of Bern.⁶

Another significant debate was held with the Anabaptists from March 11 until March 17, 1538, at Bern. They were again assured safe-conduct to and from the debate. Thirty-nine Anabaptists appeared. All except five were from Bern. Three came from other parts of the Swiss Confederacy and two from the German Empire. The council entered into this debate with high hopes since Martin Weniger, who played such an important part in the Zofingen debate, had in the meantime joined the state church in Schaffhausen. Eight topics were discussed. They included: how much the Old and New Testaments should be obeyed, the method of choosing ministers, what the Holy Christian church is, the meaning of baptism and when and how it should be administered, the oath, whether a Christian may be a government official, and the ban. The debate itself was very similar to the one held some six years previous. Most of the same topics were discussed and very few new arguments were introduced by either side. The state ministers were very disappointed that none of the Anabaptists changed sides. The decision given was "that the Anabaptists had refused to accept teaching from the Scriptures and refused to confess their errors." The threat was again made that if any should return who had been banished they would be put to death without mercy. Although the Anabaptists were promised a copy of the proceedings this was denied them.⁷

Because of the utter failure (so far as the state church officials

⁵ *Handlung oder Acta gehaltener Disputation und Gespräch zu Zoffingen inn Berner Biet mit den Widertöuffern* (Froschauer, Zurich, 1532). Copy in the Goshen College Library.

⁶ Müller, *op. cit.*, 47-48.

⁷ U.P. 80. This is the official copy. Two reports made by secretaries appear in U.P. 80.¹ See also Jan Matthijssen, "The Bern Disputation of 1538," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XXII, 1 (January, 1948), 19-33.

were concerned) of this last debate with the Anabaptists, added to the fact that the Anabaptist faith was actually being propagandized through the debates, it was decided not to hold any more such open meetings.⁸

Punishment

The price to pay in order to be an Anabaptist in the state of Bern during the sixteenth century was often not a small one. At least forty paid with their lives. Countless others were imprisoned and later banished if they refused to join the state church.

Mandates were frequently issued by the Bernese council giving orders on how the local authorities should deal with the Anabaptists. There was some fluctuation from year to year in the severity of the orders. During periods of war threat the mandates were more severe. The authorities soon found that extreme cruelty did not diminish the numbers. Neither did the use of more humane methods solve their problem of exterminating Anabaptist beliefs.

The general pattern followed by the mandates was this: first, imprisonment with the opportunity to renounce their faith; second, banishment from Bernese territory with a forced oath never to return; third, if the Anabaptist returned he was charged with breaking his oath and was to be punished by the death sentence without trial.

In the actual execution of the mandates great variation took place. The ministers and leaders of the Anabaptists were always treated with greater cruelty than were members. The rack was sometimes used to exact confessions. The pillory was used as a rather standard punishment for those who broke their oath and returned. Death by water or sword was reserved for those who were especially obstinate and dangerous in the sight of the officials.

The reasons for the cruel treatment of a minority group that was essentially innocent are quite clear. The state-church clergy would always insist that it was a matter of saving souls who were lost outside their church. Actually the main reason was fear by the clergy of losing their monopolistic position on things religious in certain areas if this movement was left uncontrolled. It appeared

⁸ Müller, *op. cit.*, 79-81.

that this could easily happen as the number of Anabaptist sympathizers and friends seems to have been large, especially in the rural areas. The authorities feared the loss of army manpower especially during wartime if Anabaptism should go uncontrolled.

Through a very fortunate incident a list of the Anabaptists who suffered the death penalty at Bern has been preserved. Hans Lörsch (Lötscher) from Latterbach was a prisoner for quite some time at the *Waisenhaus* (orphanage) in Bern before being taken away in chains as a galley slave. In 1667 while a prisoner he had the opportunity to go through the *Turmbücher* (prison records) and copy the names of the Anabaptists who had been killed at Bern. Through some unknown means this list was given to Christian Kropf, an Anabaptist who was not a prisoner, and then found its way into the first German edition of the *Märtyrerspiegel* (*Martyrs' Mirror*) printed at Ephrata, Pennsylvania, in 1748.⁹

The list of the forty martyrs together with additional notes concerning them follows:

1. Hans Hansmann (called Seckler) from Basel; drowned July, 1529, in the Aar River in Bern.¹⁰ In a letter from Haller to Zwingli dated April 25, 1527, he was called the leader of the Anabaptists. He was one of the eight Anabaptists who attended the great disputation at Bern in 1528 when it was decided to change the church from Roman Catholicism to a Reformed state church. He took part in the Anabaptist debate of 1528 at Bern; his views are recorded in the record of that debate.¹¹

2. Hans Dreier (Treyer) from Aarau; drowned July, 1529, in the Aar River at Bern. He attended the debate of 1528 where he was examined. His views were recorded in the same manner as those of Hans Hansmann.¹²

3. Heinrich Seiler, a hatmaker from Aarau; drowned July, 1529, in the Aar River in Bern. His examination reveals his views

⁹ Tielman Jansz van Braght, *Der blutige Schauplatz oder Märtyrerspiegel der Taufgesinnten* (Ephrata, Pa., 1748), (Scottsdale, Pa., 1950), 1129-1130.

¹⁰ See note 7. Also see Geiser, *op. cit.*, 171. Lerch claims the old Nydegg bridge to have been the scene of the drownings while Geiser maintains it to have been the Bluturm.

¹¹ Dr. Adolf Fluri, "Täuferhinrichtungen in Bern im 16 Jahrhundert," *Berner Heim* 1896, No. 35, 279-80; No. 36, 284-5.

¹² *Ibid.*, No. 35, 280; No. 36, 284-5.

as is the case of the above two whom it appears were drowned at the same time.¹³

4. Conrad Eichacher (Eicher) from Steffisburg; drowned on February 21, 1530, in the Aar River at Bern. He was a minister of the Bernese Anabaptists. The trial against him started in August, 1529. He was released on October 18 when he declared that he had erred.¹⁴ But on December 30 he was again arrested and put on trial until the following February when he was put to death.¹⁵

5 and 6. Two Anabaptists from the district of Bipp were executed at Bern sometime between 1530 and 1535.¹⁶

7. Moritz Kessler from Sumiswald; executed at Bern in March 1535. On October 12, 1532, Kessler promised to stay away from the Anabaptists but only a month later (November 20) he was threatened with banishment for not having his child baptized. In February, 1533, he was arrested for perjury and with his wife and child was exiled. For two years nothing more is mentioned about him in the records. But on April 1, 1535, it was recorded that Kessler's wife left the Anabaptists and had her child baptized. His name is conspicuously absent but in the records of money disbursed to the gravedigger during this period a sum is mentioned as having been paid for the burial of "the Kessler."¹⁷

8. Ulrich Schneider from Lützelflüh; executed by the sword at Bern likely in March, 1535. No more definite information is known concerning him. It is recorded that "a Schnider" was imprisoned at Aarburg with Hägerly, number 10 in this list.¹⁸

9. A young man from the Valais (Wallis) was executed by the sword at Bern in March, 1535. This record could also be interpreted to mean that this man was from the Anabaptist family named Wallis of Liestal.¹⁹

10. Högerli (Hagerley) from Aarburg. On August 8, 1534, a record states that he was jailed for the third time because of

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ de Quervain, *op. cit.*, 123.

¹⁵ Fluri, *op. cit.*, No. 37, 292-4.

¹⁶ de Quervain, *op. cit.*, 153.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 153-4. After March 13, 1535, a law was in effect that Anabaptist men should be executed by the sword and women by drowning. Until this time all were executed by drowning.

¹⁹ Paul Burckhardt, *Die Basler Täufer* (Basel, 1898), 25.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 154. Also Jakob Heiz, *Täufer im Aargau* (Aarau, 1902), 132.

Anabaptist ideas. He was taken to Bern on August 10, 1534. It appears that he was executed after the harsh mandate of March 13, 1535, but further details are lacking.²⁰

11. Moritz Losenegger, a zealous Anabaptist minister from near Langnau, was executed on May 2, 1536, at Bern. His name is first mentioned on December 20, 1532, when he was imprisoned at Thun for perjury, having been deported and returned contrary to his oath. On January 8 he was released supposedly because the Thun clergy convinced him to give up his Anabaptist ideas. In the autumn of 1535 he was rebaptized at Trachselwald. His arrest was immediately ordered but not until shortly before his execution does it appear that it was possible to take him to Bern. The captor received eight pounds (\$120) instead of the usual one pound (\$15).²¹

12. Bernhard Wälti from Rüderswil was executed July 7, 1537, at Bern.

13. Hans Schweizer from Rüegsau was likely executed either in July or August, 1537, at Bern.

14. Jürg Hofer from Obergallbach in the district of Signau was executed at Bern on August 28, 1537.

15. Ulrich Bichsel was executed at Bern during the latter part of 1537 or the forepart of 1538.²²

16. Barbeli Willher from Hasli was drowned at Bern during the same period as number 15 above. Perhaps this Barbara or the one following is the one referred to as "Barbli with the wooden leg" who was banished twice.

17. Barbeli from Sumiswald living at Studen near Biel was drowned at Bern during the same period as numbers 15 and 16.

18. Catharina Friedli Imhoff was drowned at Bern during the same period as the above-mentioned persons.

19. Verena Iseli from Schüpbach near Signau was drowned at Bern during the latter part of 1537 or forepart of 1538.

20. Ulrich from Rüegsau was put to death at Bern during the same period as those above.

²⁰ de Quervain, *op. cit.*, 154.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 155.

²² No additional information is known concerning numbers 12, 13, 14, 15 besides that given in the *Martyrs' Mirror*.

21. Cunss Seidenkohen from Constance was executed at Bern on March 28, 1538.²³

22. Peter Stucki living at Wimmis was executed at Bern on April 16, 1538. Perhaps this is the same Peter Stucki from Oberdiessbach mentioned as attending the Anabaptist debate in March, 1538.²⁴

23. Ulrich Huber from Röthenbach in the district of Signau was executed at Bern sometime between April and August, 1538.

24. Hans Willer. Executed at Bern in August, 1538.

25. Elsbeth Küpfer from Sumiswald was drowned at Bern in the latter part of 1538.

26. A wife from Sumiswald was executed by drowning at Bern on May 28, 1538.

27. A wife from Grosshöchstetten was drowned at Bern the latter part of 1538.

28. Peter Wessenmiller (Wyssmüller?) from Wimmis was executed at Bern on September 17, 1538.²⁵

29. Stäffen Rüeeggesser was put to death at Einigen on November 8, 1538. He attended the Anabaptist debate at Bern in March, 1538.²⁶

30. A person from the district of Signau was put to death at Bern late in 1538.

31. A person from Sumiswald was executed at Bern late in 1538.

32. Rudolf Iseli from the Tannental was executed at Bern late in 1538.²⁷

33. Lorenz Aeberli from Grünen was executed at Bern on June 3, 1539. He was imprisoned in 1533 but released when he took an oath. He also took part in the Anabaptist debate in March, 1538.²⁸

34. Hans Schuhmacher from Wynstägen near Safenwil in Aargau was executed at Bern sometime during the period 1539 to 1542. Other members of this family moved to Thürnen in what is now Canton Basel-Land.²⁹

²³ No additional information is known concerning numbers 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 besides that given in the *Martyrs' Mirror*.

²⁴ U.P. 80 a. See list of participants.

²⁵ Note 23 also applies to numbers 23 through 28.

²⁶ See note 1.

²⁷ Note 23 also applies to numbers 30, 31, 32.

²⁸ U.P. 80 a. See list of participants.

²⁹ Heiz, *op. cit.*, 54.

35. A person from Oberbipp was executed at Bern on May 1, 1542.

36. Peter Anken from the Siebental was executed by the sword at Bern sometime during 1542 or 1543.

37. Christian Oberlen (Oberli) was executed at Bern on September 17, 1543.

38. Hans Anken from Amsoldingen was executed at Bern sometime between 1543 and 1566.

39. Wälti Gerber from the Streithalden near Röthenbach in the district of Signau was executed at Bern on July 30, 1566. For a time he was the leading Anabaptist minister in the Emmental. In 1564 a notice went out to the various districts to arrest him and bring him to Bern.³⁰

40. Hans Haslibacher from Haslibach in the district of Sumiswald was beheaded at Bern on November 20, 1571. He was an old Anabaptist minister. The first notice concerning his Anabaptist activities appears in 1532. He is on the list of those who attended the Anabaptist debate of 1538.³¹ Numerous notices appear concerning his final arrest. The most vivid description of his imprisonment and death is given in a poem written by one of his fellow Anabaptist prisoners. It has been set to music and included in the hymnbook of the Anabaptists commonly known as the *Ausbund*.³²

In the above list of forty executed Anabaptists only thirty-one names are given. Seven have been verified by other records than the list itself.³³ Another six are mentioned in the records as having been Anabaptists.³⁴ Still another eight carry known Anabaptist family names.³⁵ There remain ten which until now have no other proof than the list as given in the *Martyrs' Mirror*. Considering the few records that exist from these times and the many gaps in the ones that were preserved this is a rather high percentage of verified cases. It proves beyond a doubt that the list was not padded. There is some evidence that there were more put to death than the list shows.³⁶

³⁰ Fluri, *op. cit.* Nos. 38 and 40.

³¹ See note 5.

³² Fluri, *op. cit.*, No. 40. Geiser, *op. cit.*, 176, 179, 182-7, 191.

³³ See numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 11, 39, 40.

³⁴ See numbers 7, 10, 22, 29, 33, 34.

³⁵ See numbers 8, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 24.

³⁶ de Quervain, *op. cit.*, 148-58. Fluri, *op. cit.*, Nos. 35, 36, 37, 38, 40.

Although the death sentence remained in effect until the eighteenth century it was only a threat after 1571 as it was not used after that time in the state of Bern. Other forms of punishment continued. Dunking was practiced. The rack is mentioned as being used for exacting information and confessions. The pillory was the common punishment for breaking the oath which was the crime Anabaptists were charged with committing if they returned from banishment. At least one Anabaptist had his ear cut off for his stubbornness.⁸⁷ The punishment that followed the above methods (according to some contemporaries) was even more cruel than the death sentence. This was the selling of Anabaptist men to the Venetian galleys to work for several years as oarsmen slaves.

Beliefs and Confessions of Faith

The two sources of knowledge of the theological position of the sixteenth century Bernese Anabaptists are their own rules and confessions of faith, and secondly, the reports on their debates and trials. As the debates and trials were recorded only by state church secretaries it can be justly concluded that many omissions and additions were made to the disfavor of the Anabaptists. The rules and confessions of faith are few but together these sources do give a glimpse of their spirit during this period.

An old list of seven principles that is presumed to have been written during the decade of the 1520's has been preserved at the Bernese State Archives. The general tone is that of a live, energetic, Bible-centered group reminding one of early Apostolic Christianity. The author of these rules is not known. The manuscript seems to have been written by the same hand that wrote the copy of the 1527 Schleithem Confession of faith which is also at the Bernese State Archives. The essence of the seven articles follows:

"1. The brethren and sisters should meet at least three or four times each week to study the teachings of Christ and His apostles and admonish each other in the Lord.

"2. When the brethren and sisters come together they should read something they understand which God has laid on their heart. The others should remain quiet and listen so that not two or three are speaking at the same time and hinder the others from hearing. The psalter should be read daily by all.

⁸⁷ R.M. 427, 279.

"3. No one should be frivolous in the church of God, whether with words or deeds. Good behaviour should be shown, also before the heathen.

"4. When a brother does another brother wrong he should be admonished after the manner of Christ and punished in a Christian and brotherly way. This is the duty of each.

"5. The brethren and sisters should not have anything that belongs to them alone, but rather they should have all things in common as was the case with the Christians during Apostolic times. There should be a church purse to be used for those who are truly in need. As in the time of the Apostles, no brother should be left in want.

"6. The food for meals during times of meeting should be furnished by the brethren at whose home the meeting is held. A soup or cabbage and meat should be given in small quantities as eating and drinking are not the kingdom of heaven.

"7. The Lord's Supper should be observed as often as the brethren come together in order to proclaim the death of the Lord. This should be an admonition for each to meditate on, for as Christ has given His life for us, and has shed His blood for us, we should be willing to give Him our love and our life. All the Brethren should be willing to do this for Christ's sake."³⁸

The earliest confession of faith that the Bernese Anabaptists are known to have used is one that was compiled under the direction of Michael Sattler of Stauffen in Baden on February 24, 1527, at "Schlatten am Randen."³⁹ At this time a synod of Swiss and south German Anabaptists was held.⁴⁰ The seven articles included in this statement of faith are summarized as follows:

1. Baptism. All those should be baptized who have repented and amended their life after they request it. All infant baptism is excluded.

2. Ban. The ban shall be used with all those who have given themselves to the Lord and allow themselves to call each other brother and sister but have nevertheless fallen into error and sin. They shall be

³⁸ U.P. 80, No. 5, Copied in Müller, *op. cit.*, 37, 38.

³⁹ It has long been a controversial issue among Anabaptist historians whether Schlatten am Randen refers to the present town of Schleithem in Canton Schaffhausen (which when spoken in the local dialect sounds similar to Schlatten) or whether it was the present village of Schlatt am Randen, Bezirk Engen, Land Baden, Germany, near the border of Canton Schaffhausen. Most German Anabaptist historians favor the latter while supporters of the former theory are principally Swiss. See *Corpus Reformatorum*, XCIII, *Huldreich Zwingli Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 102/103 (1936), 103ff. Geiser, *op. cit.*, 313. John C. Wenger, "The Schleithem Confession of Faith," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XIX, No. 4 (October, 1945), 245-6. According to Wenger, Dr. Fritz Blanke "has shown conclusively that Schlatten is simply the local dialect designation for Schleithem, a Swiss village near Schaffhausen."

⁴⁰ U.P. 80, No. 9. Copy in Müller, *op. cit.*, 38-42. English translation is given in Wenger, *op. cit.*, 247-53.

admonished privately twice and the third time disciplined before the entire church after the instruction in Matthew 18. But such is to take place before the Lord's Supper so all may come in a spirit of oneness to partake of this holy ordinance.

3. Communion. In the breaking of bread we are united. All who wish to break bread will do it to the remembrance of the broken body of Christ and all who will drink will do it to the memory of the shed blood of Christ. They should have previously been united through baptism to the church of God of which Christ is the head.

4. Separation. One should abstain from all the evil and wickedness that the devil has planted in the world. All that is not united with God and Christ are an abomination which we should avoid. This includes all popish and anti-popish works and meetings, inns, duties to unbelievers, and other similar things. We shall also avoid the weapons of authority as the sword, armor, and things of that nature for friends or against enemies. In the strength of the Word of God: You should not resist evil.

5. Pastors in the church of God. The pastor of the church of God shall follow the orders of Paul. He should have a good report by those of the faith. This office shall be to read, admonish, give communion, teach, punish or ban in the church. He shall do all to serve the Gospel and shall also live as the Lord has ordained. If a pastor is to be disciplined there should be at least two or three present. If he has sinned he should be punished before all so that others may have fear. If the pastor is exiled or if he is directed home through the cross, another should from that hour on be put in his place.

6. The sword. The sword is ordained from God to punish and kill the evil and protect and fight for the good. But in the perfection of Christ the ban is used to warn and exclude those who have sinned. Governmental officials are of the world; Christians of the spirit. Those of the world are armed with steel and iron but the Christians are armed with the armor of God which are truth, righteousness, peace, holiness, and the Word of God.

7. The oath. Christ forbids the pious to swear, whether it be true or false, whether by heaven or the earth. Christ has said that our speech should be yes, yes and no, no.

In 1568 a meeting of Anabaptist ministers and elders of south Germany and Switzerland was held at Strasbourg. At that time a list of rules of order was decided upon which came into general use among the Anabaptists of Switzerland. These rules were copied and recopied so that each congregation might have a copy. In 1607 another conference was held at Strasbourg at which time these rules were slightly revised. Numerous copies have been preserved. It has always been known as *Abred der Diener und Eltesten*

*von vielen Orten in der Versammlung zu Strassburg anno 1568.*⁴¹ The first indication that the Anabaptists stressed plainness in attire is perhaps the chief difference in this list of rules from previous ones.

The other main source for our knowledge of the sixteenth century theological views and religious practices of the Bernese Anabaptists is gained from a study of the testimonies they gave at the various debates and trials. It is interesting to note the very close agreement in each point among the various leaders whose testimonies have been preserved. In no point do they differ from the confessions of faith and list of church rules referred to above.⁴²

Spread of Bernese Anabaptism in the Sixteenth Century

Within ten years after the first mention of Anabaptism in Bernese records we find that it spread into many sections of the state. The first record (1526) mentions a woman in Zofingen who held views on Anabaptism. At about the same time mention is made of Anabaptists in Lenzburg and Aarau which were a part of the state of Bern at that time. In 1527 an estimated twenty Anabaptists were in the city of Bern.⁴³ Especially during the years following 1531 did the Anabaptists make many converts. In 1532 orders on how to deal with the Anabaptists went to the following district offices: Aarburg, Thun, Unterseen, Interlaken, Hasli, Oberland, Trachselwald, and Signau. In 1533 similar orders were sent to Burgdorf, Aarburg, Brandis, Sumiswald, Signau, Aarau, Wangen, Aarwangen, and Zofingen. In 1534 orders were sent to Aarwangen, Trachselwald, Trub, Burgdorf, Brandis, Signau, Sumiswald, and Höchstetten. In 1536 the district of Biberstein, Seftigen, and Schwarzenburg were included in similar orders.⁴⁴ In 1538 Anabaptists were found in the following districts: Thun (especially at Steffisburg), Burgdorf, Lenzburg, Aarburg, Frutigen, Wangen (especially at Roggwil), Sumiswald (numerous), Bipp, Münsterthal, Signau (many), Trachselwald (numerous).⁴⁵

⁴¹ See Müller, *op. cit.*, 50-52. Also Harold S. Bender, "Source Material for Mennonite History: I. The Discipline Adopted by the Strasburg Conference of 1568." *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, I, No. 1 (January, 1927), 57-66. English translation with the original text.

⁴² Cf. Müller, *op. cit.*, 42-45.

⁴³ Letter dated April 25, 1527, from B. Haller to H. Zwingli. *Zwingli Werke*, IX, 104.

⁴⁴ Müller, *op. cit.*, 72.

⁴⁵ U.P. 801. Included in the report of the Anabaptist debate of 1538 held in Bern.

As the century progressed the Emmental became ever more the asylum for the Bernese Anabaptists. In the deep valleys and on more inaccessible highland farms as well as the vicinity of the Lucerne border they found methods of hiding and evading the police. Only in this section were they able to carry on a continuous organization during the three centuries of ruthless intolerance that followed. Anabaptist groups in other sections of Bern lasted well into the seventeenth century and some even into the eighteenth century. But as they were slowly but surely annihilated in Zurich so were they eventually exterminated in Bern outside of the Emmental.

III

Bernese Anabaptism in the Seventeenth Century

Introduction

Bern was politically strong during the seventeenth century and as such became a mighty stronghold of the Reformed church which it endeavored to protect by every possible means. Few methods were untried by them to win the Anabaptists¹ over to the state church. But often they realized the fruitlessness of their endeavors seeing rather that the Anabaptists gained in numbers. The years 1644 to 1670 were the most difficult in this century for the Anabaptists. They were especially numerous in the Emmental, with Langnau and Sumiswald their centers, although nearly every village had a few members.^{1a} Anabaptist sympathizers and "half-Anabaptists" (Halbtäufer) were most numerous during this century. Their large numbers caused the Bernese government as much worry as the Anabaptists themselves.²

Persecution in the Seventeenth Century

Although the death sentence was never carried out in Bern after 1571 it remained a part of the statutes to warn the Anabaptists and was often used as a threat to the more obstinate. The sentencing of Anabaptist men to work as galley slaves was considered by some as being much more cruel than the death sen-

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¹ It is difficult to know when to use the designation "Mennonite" in place of "Anabaptist" for the Swiss Mennonites. The name "Mennonite" was never used in the public documents and only in the latter part of the nineteenth century did it come into use by the Swiss Mennonites themselves. On the other hand, the term "Anabaptist" was also seldom used in the documents and never by the Swiss Mennonites themselves. The terms "Täufer" and "Wiedertäufer" were most commonly used. On the other hand, the name "Mennonite" has come into such widespread general use during the nineteenth century for all the Mennonites outside of Holland, and exclusively so in North America, that it is the proper name to designate the modern descendants of the Swiss Anabaptists. Only in the French language was the term "Anabaptistes" generally used, and that up to the twentieth century, but even there "Mennonite" has replaced it altogether.

^{1a} (Samuel Geiser, ed.) *Taufgesinnten-Gemeinden* (Karlsruhe, 1931), 389-393.

² John Horsch, *Mennonites in Europe* (Scottsdale, 1942), 392-395. Treats the problem as it appeared in various areas where Anabaptists were located. Several references are made to the situation in the state of Bern.

tence. The most common treatment was imprisonment. Ministers would try to win them over to the state church, sometimes by kind Biblical discussions and at other occasions by cruel admonitions and condemnations for their stubbornness. If it was not possible to convert them to the state church they were usually expelled from Bernese territory. They were led to the border and forced to take an oath never to return. Those who did return, of whom it seems there was quite a number, were punished for breaking their oath. The ordinary punishment for this crime was to be put in the pillory plus a prison term. Some were sent to the Venetian galleys as slaves but most of them were again banished with further threats.

The mandate of 1585, which was revised and reprinted in 1597, was still in effect when the century opened. This strict mandate against the Anabaptists was to be read once each year from the pulpit of each state church. Among other things it stressed that the ministers and other church officials should make every effort to convert the Anabaptists by Biblical argument. When they were converted, which seldom was the case, they were to confess their former errors before the entire congregation.³

In the notes of the Langnau Reformed minister, J. R. Ph. Forrer, made in 1621, there are numerous mentions of his attempts to convert Anabaptists within his parish without success. He admonished Simon Bichsel telling him that he should attend church and hear the sermons. But Bichsel answered that all warning, teaching, and threats would avail nothing as it is plainly written in the Bible, "Go out from them."⁴ The brothers Durs and Bendicht Baumgartner of Dürsrütti gave equally frank answers to the minister when asked about their religion. Ulli Baumgartner was put on the rack after he refused to tell of his faith to the Bernese officials.⁵

In 1644 larger discussions with the Anabaptists took place. In the districts of Zofingen, Aarau, and Lenzburg some forty were found. These Anabaptists asked for a hearing before the govern-

³ *Nuw Mandat unnd Ordnung von Schultheissen Klein unnd grossen Rhat der Statt Bern/ der Widertöufferen wegen* (1597). A copy of the original 1597 printing of this mandate is in the possession of the author; another copy is in the Goshen College Library.

⁴ *Einfaltiger und nothwendiger und nutzlicher Bericht von dem Eidtschwur. . . .* Stadtbibliothek Bern. *Mss. Hist. Helv.* VII, 144, 12.

⁵ Geiser, *op. cit.*, 390.

ment. It was agreed to give them permission for safe-conduct on their journey. Hans Tester and Hans Glur were questioned by Marx Rüttmeier. They declared that they could not follow those who were learned as they proceed in all ungodliness. They also complained that the ungodly permit all to participate in the Lord's Supper without using the ban. In the same manner Hans Stenz and Martin Burger had a hearing on March 2, 1646. They were held prisoner and heard again on December 30, 1647. As this also brought no turning of them to the Protestant religion they were again heard separately on January 6, 1648. After a long hearing and a clear statement of their convictions, they were finally sentenced to a term at the Zurich penitentiary. From here they escaped but Stenz was later captured and exiled.⁶

By 1640 it appears that in the Emmental there were a considerable number of Anabaptists. Each village had a group. On the seventeenth of January, 1640, orders went out from the government at Bern to Aarwangen, Zofingen, Aarburg, Lenzburg, Thun, Signau, Brandis, and Trachselwald that on January 25 a meeting to review the Anabaptist situation was to be held. The old mandates were again put into effect and strict orders were given to the local authorities to "stop looking through their fingers," and "with God's help to completely outroot this sect." On April 11, 1644, orders went out from Bern to the district officials to imprison the obstinate Anabaptist ministers Uli Zougg, Uli Neuhaus, and Christen Stauffer. In December of the same year a mandate urged that through argument the Anabaptists should be won but if this was impossible they should be exiled and forced to take the oath (*Urfehde*) never to return. In February, 1649, the old minister Joseph Widmer was imprisoned at the *Insel* in Bern but because of his old age he was released upon the promise that he would not preach and would attend the state-church services. After the Bernese Peasant War in 1653 there was a significant gain in the numbers of Anabaptists in the Emmental, but shortly thereafter another wave of persecution started. The order went out to capture the ministers of the Anabaptists and imprison them in the newly erected penitentiary and orphanage (*Zucht und Waisenhaus*) at Bern. There they were to be won over to the state church through

⁶ Geiser, *op. cit.*, 391-393. Müller, *op. cit.*, 106-115.

prayer and the exposition of God's Word. The first minister to be brought in was Anthoni Himmelberg from Wattenwil. He was forced to spend twenty-eight months in this prison (June 24, 1658, to October 25, 1660) which was the remainder of his natural life. On December 20, 1658, a note was sent out to the district officials to make a list of the Anabaptists and to capture their leading ministers and ringleaders and have them brought to the "orphanage" at Bern. In January, 1659, Anabaptist hunters broke into a meeting at Dürsrütti and took away the minister, Ulli Baumgartner, and three other leading members while the rest of the congregation could only stand by and weep. The captives were taken to Trachselwald and then to Bern where attempts were made to convert them to the state-church religion without avail. So banishment was the punishment. One of these four wrote an account of the story in the form of a poem which was published in 1696 in the Anabaptist hymnbook entitled *Geistliches Liederbüchlein*.⁷

The Bernese Council formed the Commission for Anabaptist Affairs (*Committierten zum Täufergeschäft*) on January 4, 1659. This was a specially appointed committee of church officials and government authorities who were to deal with all matters concerning Anabaptists.⁸

Intercession on the part of the Dutch Mennonites on behalf of the Bernese Anabaptists started during 1659. A Mennonite merchant in Amsterdam named Hans Vlamingh wrote a long letter on October 24, 1659, to Christoph Lüthard, Professor of Theology in Bern, and also a member of the Anabaptist Commission, in which he pointed out the unreasonableness of the state-church persecution of the Anabaptists and stressed their pious qualities.⁹ A few weeks before (October 9), Heidanus, Professor of Theology at Leiden, had written to the same Christoph Lüthard. The following April 16 Hans Flamingk wrote a letter to another member of the Anabaptist Commission, Wilhelm von Diesbach. The contents are much the same as his letter to Lüthard. A formal protest from the Dutch government was made in February, 1660, on behalf of the Anabaptists in Zürich and Bern, to their respective governments.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 393-397. *Geistliches Liederbüchlein*, 1696.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 398.

⁹ Ernst Müller, *Geschichte der bernischen Täufer* (Frauenfeld, 1895).

The answer from these governments to the various Dutch who tried to intervene was to the effect that it was the duty of the government to retain the Reformed religion in its pure form. It was claimed that the Anabaptists had made inroads into the state religion so that they were forced to devise means of uprooting it. They also claimed that they were very mild with them, not putting them into a strict prison but rather imprisoning them in an orphanage and were trying to win them by teaching and discussing the Bible with them. If they did not yield they were led out of the land, they said.¹⁰

On September 10, 1660, twelve of those being held at the "orphanage" in Bern were put on board a boat and sent to Brugg where they were led over the border by the police and forced to promise not to return. They were told to join their brethren in Holland. On January 20, 1663, the government of Bern reported that nearly all of those banished had returned to their homes and that they should be brought back to the "orphanage" in Bern.¹¹

On January 6, 1668, another debate was called by the Bernese government to "discuss and debate in a friendly manner" the main points of the errors of the Anabaptists. But the Anabaptists were a bit weary of debates at which there was no fair decision; so none appeared.¹²

In 1670 a group of Reformed ministers were asked to give their judgment on the printed mandates that were in effect concerning Anabaptists. The opinion of five of the ministers on this commission was that the Anabaptist problem was grossly mishandled and that past events were a stain on the Reformed religion. This group said that religion is not something that can be forced on a person at the point of a sword, rather it must be taught. They also stated that when Christ sent out His apostles to preach He did not say anything about the Gospel being spread by governments, nor whipping, nor burning with irons if the hearers would not accept His Gospel. The other group in this commission upheld the orders and mandates and suggested that the Anabaptists should be debated with again and if that availed nothing they should be banished; life imprisonment availed nothing.¹³

¹⁰ Müller, *op. cit.*, 186.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 187.

¹² *Mandatenbuch*, VIII, 417.

¹³ *Beide Meinungen des Convents . . . und das berühmte Täufer-Memorial. . .* Stadtbibliothek Bern. *Mss. Hist. Helv.* III, 272.

The mandate that followed on September 8, 1670, provided that those who would not swear the oath of allegiance to the Bernese government should leave within two weeks. Those who had been dealt with and warned a number of times before were to be punished by death. Other stubborn ones should be publicly whipped and led over the border; if they returned they would be given the same treatment again and then marked with a branding iron. The possessions of those who were banished would be sold and the proceeds turned over to the church to administer. A special register (*Täufer-Urbar*) was established to keep an exact record of the money accumulated in this manner. When children of Anabaptist parents joined the church they would inherit their portion of the estate that had been sold. A tenth of the property was turned over to the local government as was the case of all who legally left Bern at this time. The money from the Anabaptist possessions was used for various purposes. Some used it to repair the local church building, some to help the poor. A large amount of the money remained until the founding of the modern political townships in 1824. At that time it was turned over to the school and poor fund. This same mandate provided for heavy fines for anyone who would permit an Anabaptist to stay in his home or hold meetings on his property.¹⁴

The persecution was carried on in earnest during 1670 and 1671. Many were captured and sent to Bern where most of them had a difficult time at the "orphanage" or the Insel hospital where they were imprisoned. They were forced to work here, sometimes for several years.

After the regular church service on a specified Sunday in 1670 the state-church ministers were to have all men above the age of fifteen swear the oath of allegiance and keep a careful record of those who did. In this manner they endeavored to seek out the Anabaptists.

When expelled, parents could decide whether they wanted to take their children with them or leave them in the state of Bern. If they took them along they lost all rights to Bernese citizenship just as did their parents. Expectant mothers were permitted to remain in the land until after the birth of the child. The old and

¹⁴ Staatsarchiv Bern. Cf. *Mandatbuch* VIII and IX. Also Geiser, *op. cit.*, 406-408.

invalids were to be sent to the "orphanage" in Bern to spend their last days.

The height of the persecution came when on March 7, 1671, the government sent out a note to the district officials that the able-bodied Anabaptist men should be sent to Italy to work as oarsmen on the Venetian galleys. This punishment was feared nearly as much as the death sentence because of the terrible life of a virtual slave that this entailed. This was the same punishment that had been used by the Catholics in France against the Huguenots, when the Bernese government bought the freedom of some of the persecuted Huguenots. Now they used the same type of persecution themselves. At first twelve Anabaptists were given this sentence for two years, two of whom renounced their faith and were set free. Four others promised to leave the land. The remaining six were sent to Venice. On March 16, 1671, they were taken in chains to Thun where they were sent by boat to Brienz. The rest of the trip was made by land to Bergamo where they were turned over to the Venetian officials. The names of those who were sent at this time have never been established definitely but it appears that two of them were the brothers Hans and Melchior Lötscher from Latterbach.¹⁵ In 1673 they were again in Bern and while imprisoned Hans Lötscher copied from the prison records (*Turmbücher*) the list of those Anabaptists executed at Bern.¹⁶

The persecution seemed to have no letup, and conditions became even more difficult. About 700 persons left the state of Bern for the Palatinate,¹⁷ arriving there in extremely poor condition. Their brethren from Holland immediately sent aid and made visits among them. In letters to Holland the exiles vividly described their poor conditions in the new country. As early as 1653 it is known that Swiss Anabaptists had settled in the Palatinate, and these earlier settlers gave aid to the newcomers as best they could by helping them to find places to live. Others settled in Alsace where churches

¹⁵ Fluri, Ad., *Mss. Täufer*. No. 2, 5. Stadtbibliothek, Bern. *Mss. Hist. Helv.* XXX, 50.

¹⁶ The story of the Bernese Anabaptists' experience as galley slaves is most ably discussed in Müller, *op. cit.*, Chapter XIII (215-232). The Lötscher list was published in the Ephrata edition of the *Martyrs' Mirror* (1748) p. 938 where it was added at the last moment by being printed in the margin.

¹⁷ Geiser, *op. cit.*, 411. Other sources mention the number 700 as having left from Bern and Zurich.



Jura Anabaptists spinning. 1822.

Um Mandadt vnnnd
Ordnung vō Schultheissen klein
vnnnd grossen Rhat der Statt
Bernn / der Widertöuff-
feren wegen.

1597



1597.

Ir der Schultheis
klein vnnnd gross Rhat genampft

die zweyhundert der Statt Bernn / Empietten allen
vñ yeden vnseren sonders lieben getrūwē Kilchendieneren/
Ober vnd Vnder Ampellicen / auch vnseren Vnderchanen/
zūgehōrigen vnd verwandten / inn vnseren Stetten / Graff-
schafften / Herrschafften / Landen / Grichten vnd Gebietren
wonhafte vnd gefāsien / vnseren günstigen geneigten willen/
vnd alles gūts zūuor / Vnd thūnd ūch gmeynlich vnd sonder-
lich zūvernemen / Wiewol inn gemeynem Rächten georde-
net / gesetzt vnd verfähen / das keiner so ein mal nach Christen-
licher Ordnung getoufft worden ist / sich widerumb zum an-
deren / oder zweyten mal Touffen lassen / noch yemands dem
anderen söllicher wyß Touffen soll / Vñ wir daroff anfangs /
auch sidtbar vnser Christenlichen Reformation der nūw yn-
gershnen Irzal vnd Sect der Widertöuffery / vnnnd der selb-
en mit willigen versürigen vnd vffsürigen anhangs / durch
vilfaltige Mandat / offentliche gespräch / vnnnd Predigen vff
den Rängen / auch sonst durch mengerley peen vñ straffen /
die sy zūerwarten haben sölten / Ernstige vermanungen /
warnungen vnd erinnerungen vffgan lassen / die vnseren vom
söllichem laster / vnd verwirung deß Widertouffs abzūwy-
sen. So hat doch söllichs leyder bißhar nit so vil verfangen /
dann das wir sehend das sölliche schädliche Sect an ertlichen
orten mer zū / dann abgenommen / Hierunder auch wol ver-
merckt vnd erfaren / das vnser verner ynsāhen vnnnd arbeit /
vmb sonst vnd ytel ist: Wann dem vrsprung (dauon söllich
vbel harflūst) nit begegnet wurde / Diawyl in disen lezsten
zytten gar nach alle Stānd verbōseret / vnd dero wenig sind /
die mit läben vnd wandel sich haltend vnnnd erzeitgind / wie sy
sölten / Besonders vnder ūch Predicanten vnd Kilchendies-
neren /



Schweiz Landesmuseum Zurich

Hans Lugibühl family and beehives. Drawing by L. Vogel.



Nur Schultzeiß / Racht und Burch

niglichen ; Demnach Wir durch Unsere von Zeit zu Zeit
sorg Uns jederzeit alles Ernsts angelegen seyn lassen / und vermittelst
ausserst getrachtet / die so genante Sect der Widertäufer auß Unseren Landen
der die von Zeit zu Zeit im Land befindliche so genante Widertäufer vorgekehrte u
gestiegen. Wann nun solche Leuth ihrer natürlichen Oberkeit den Eyd der Treuen
dardurch das liebe Vatter-Land zu schützen und zuschirmen / rund ausschlagen / w
Sect zu verhüten / nicht zugeben mag / daß dergleichen Leuth darinnen geduldet w
lung allen ermelter Sect ergebenden Persohnen den freyen Austritt aus Unseren Landen / wie nicht weniger
sothaner Unser gnädigen Erklärung und Willen nicht Folg geleistet worden / scheint nicht die geringste Ursach
ihre vorschüßende Gewissens-Freyheit üben zu können / verzeiget worden ; Als habend wir zu Befürderung
niglichen Eundt gemacht haben wollend / mit Ihro Königl. Maj. in Preussen durch dero darzu begünstigten
Dero darzu begünstigten Herren Secretarium Runkel wegen Ubernennung dieser so genannten Widertäufer
1. So verharrend Wir anoch in gleichen Gedanken und wollend hierdurch nachgegeben haben / daß
Preussische verfügen zukönnen ; Der Meynung jedernoch / daß nach anzogenen Herren Secretarij Runkels
figer Nachbarschaft alle etwaß hinder der Graffschaft Neuenburg und Valendis hernach / zu keinen Preysen
feren Mittlen Unsere hievorige Erkenntnuß dahin bestätiget / daß der Abreisenden würdlich entdeckte oder noch
hiesigem Verhaß sich befinden / zuständige Mittel gemeint / ja wann gleich deren einige den Gemeind- oder
getrettenen oder verwiesenen Täuflern harzühren / und den G'meinden übergeben seyn möchten.
11. Lassend Wir es nochmahlen darbey bewenden / daß alle Täuflerische Persohnen / welche entwede
Nichtigmachung und Mitnennung ihrer Mittlen Unsere Land wiederum betretten und zum Vorschein kom
oder verwiesenen von Obrigkeit wegen verschickt / oder Lehrer und Zeugnußgeber seyn möchten / gleicher Freyhe
111. Habend Wir auch gutfunden / daß die im Oberkeitlichen verhaßt sich befindliche Täufler (an
sich gebührend wieder einzufinden und inzwischen weder Täufler-Versamblungen noch andere Unruhen anzu
nen zwar nicht genießen können / dannoch bewilliget und zugestanden / ihre etwaß noch im Land habende zu
zugehen.

IV. Die Abreiß Zeit dieser Täufler-Leuthen habend Wir mit dem Herren Secretario Runkel dahin
Zeit verstatet / und über biß gesetzte Zähl anoch ein Jahr vergort werden solle / innert welchem Jahr sie ihr
jeglichen Dyrts under Oberkeitlicher Bestätigung verordnet / und dieselben sonderlich zu schuldiger Treu an
Mittel und Güter getreuwlichen angeben und ohne Betrug namhaft machen sollind.

V. Gleichwie Wir bereits underem 27. Januarij letztthin erkent / daß diesen abziehenden Täufler-Leuthe
dieser Leuthen halb mit keinen weiteren Kosten beladen / sonderen solche alsobald von hier aus biß nach Holla
nachgelassen / und denenselben darmit verschonet werden solle ; Also lassend Wir es nochmahlen darbey ohnab
Täuflerischen Ehe-Gatten oder Elteren nachziehen wolten / sie gleicher Abzug-Freyheit zugewiesen haben sollin

VI. In Ansehen dann der jenigen / da nur Mann oder Weib / oder nur eint- oder andere Kinder i
geben könte / ic. habend wir auch auf allen Zähl geordnet / daß wann Reformierte Ehe-Gatten / Item Elter
reisen wolten / daß dannzumahlen solches dergleichen Persohnen mit Aufgebung des Land- und Mann-Recht

Endtlichen dann so habend Wir auch / so wol zu Unserer daharigen Sicherheit als Benennung d
durch Einrückung gegenwärtiger öffentlicher Verkündung alles Ernsts gehebt haben / daß under dem Nahmen
tigten Verzeichnuß alle ihre Mittel und Güter getreuwlichen angeben / auch alle dero Schulden und Gegenst
bige / fahls sie dieselbe innert der im obigen gleichen 4ten Articul vernambseter Termins-Zeit ihrer Abfahrt i
ten / Confiicirt und zu unseren Händen heimbegefallen seyn sollind. Deme so ist auch Unser heiter Will

hin looß-gelassenen Täuflern verbottenen Anstellungen der Täufler-Versamblungen und anderen Unruhen /
auch auß Begehren und bestimmende Zeit / wie in gleichem obigen 3ten Articul angezogen / wieder verschoben
Fünffzig für einen Zeugnuß-Geber dreyßig / und für einen gemeinen Täufler zwanzig Dublonen Unser Verord
Oberkeits wegen verschickte Täufler dann anbelangend wollend Wir hierdurch gesetzt haben / daß selbige / sa
Gründen außgeschlossen / sich erschrächen thäten / gebührend beobachtet werden sollind. Weiters so ist auch U
Sect nicht zugethane Kinder ihr Land- und Mann-Recht zugleich weggezogen haben auch von Uns nicht m
harigen Sicherheit zuschützen und zuschirmen gänglichen entschlossen ; Fahls und wieder besseres Verhoffen ei
len / namblichen neben Aufgebung ihrer Land- und Mann-Rechten mit ihren Mittlen und Gütern ohne N
nachkommen solten / so ist Unser gänglicher Entschluß / alle und jede Fählbare / wie nicht weniger auch di
ten mit hoher Straff nach befindenden Dingen als Verführer des Volcks anzusehen / ic. Damit nun ein
licher Straff vorzukommen wüßte / wollend Wir allen und jeden Unseren Ambt-Leuthen hierdurch alles Ernst
behöriger Dyrten anschlagen zulassen. Wie zuthun und Hand obzuhalten sie bestens wüssen werdind. D

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ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՍՈՑԻԱԼԻՍՏԻԿԱՆ ԴԵՄՈՔՐԱՏԻԿԱՆ ՀԱՅՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԿԵՆՏՐՈՆԻ ՎԵՐԱԿԱՆԻՍՏԱԿԱՆ ԿՈՄԻՏԵ

[illegible][illegible]

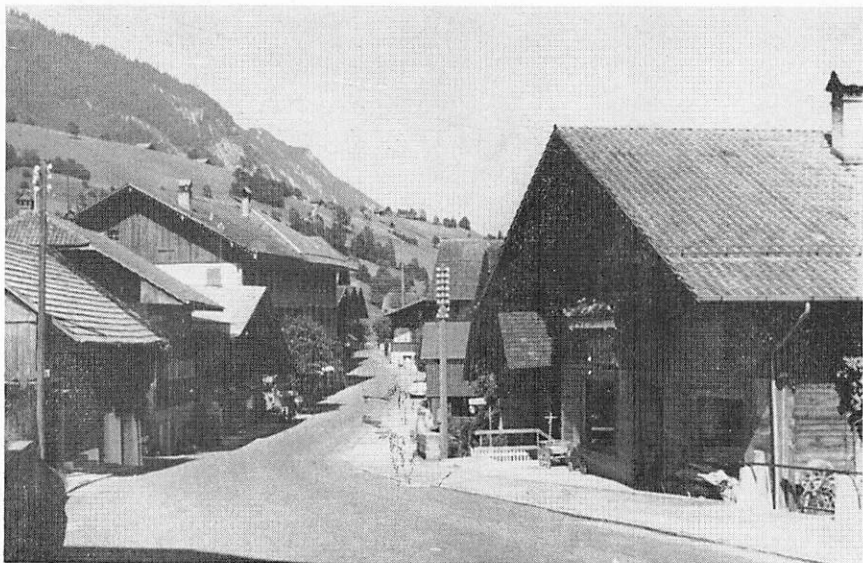
1. Statt deren thund fundt hienit ledernan-
 2. nache beßstimmte Schenken und Lande. 33. 11. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 841



Käfigturm in Bern. Anabaptists were imprisoned here during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.



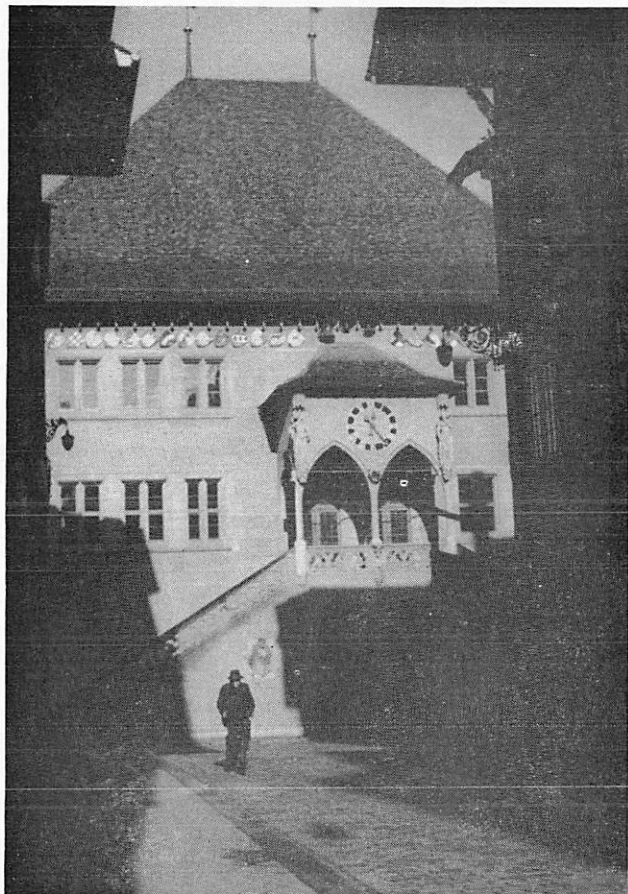
Bluturm. Some of the early Bernese Anabaptist martyrs were perhaps drowned in the Aare River at the base of the tower.



Erlenbach. Home village of Jacob Amman.



Buchwald (Ferme de la Charme) in the Normanvillars settlement. Former home of the Steiner family that migrated in 1835 to the Chippewa and Putnam settlements in Ohio.



Bernese Council House where several debates with the Anabaptists were held during the sixteenth century.



Jeangisboden chapel. Main meetinghouse and school of the Sonnenberg congregation.

were also formed. Although 1671 was the chief year that Anabaptists left Bern others continued to leave for Alsace and the Palatinate in the following years.¹⁸

The number of Anabaptists left in the state of Bern was considerably diminished by this emigration, but they were far from being exterminated as was the case in Zurich at that time. Little is recorded of the Bernese Anabaptists during the following twenty years, which indicates that the few that were left were well hidden and of little significance. In 1691 another wave of persecution started when it was decreed that all those who did not swear allegiance nor carry arms should no longer be tolerated. On February 15, 1693, the ministers' council was called on for suggestions as to how the ever rapidly growing Anabaptists could be regulated. Their suggestions were given in the form of the well-known *Täufer-Memorial*.¹⁹ It clearly points out that the blame for the continual growth of the Anabaptists lay in the general demoralization of the land and not in the Anabaptists themselves.

On July 10, 1693, the old mandate of August 9, 1659, was reissued. Added to this was an order to take as hostages two of the leading citizens of each village that refused to co-operate to the fullest in searching out and sending to Bern all Anabaptists. In the order of February, 1695, concerning the Anabaptists the Bernese government earnestly sought to root out all Anabaptists. One hundred Reichstaler (\$2,250) was to be paid for each minister that was brought in; fifty pounds (\$280) was to be the fine of anyone who rented anything to a person who did not produce a state-church membership certificate. In this manner it was to be made impossible for any Anabaptist to stay in Bernese territory without extreme difficulty.²⁰ As women were not required to swear the oath of allegiance, the church officials were to go to every house each year and find out whether they had attended church regularly, had partaken of the holy sacraments, and had had their children baptized. It was further stated in this order that no Anabaptists should be buried in the cemeteries of the state church. Beyond Sumiswald in the Kurzenei near Wasen is a secluded spot still known as the

¹⁸ Christian Neff, "Bern," in *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, I (Weierhof, 1913), 179, 180.

¹⁹ Stadtbibliothek, Bern. *Mss. Hist. Helv.* III, 272, 4. A copy appears in Müller, *op. cit.*, 145-156.

²⁰ Geiser, *op. cit.*, 415, 416.

Täuferloch which was used by the Anabaptists²¹ during times of persecution as a place of meeting and burial.

So ended a century of great growth for the Anabaptists of Bern. But this increase was not reflected in the number of them still in Bernese territory at the end of the century, for it was also the century of their greatest emigration.

Emigration from Bern

ALSACE

Strasbourg became a place of refuge for the Anabaptists soon after the beginning of the Reformation. Although not given complete liberty there they were able to exist while persecution raged in other lands. In Ensisheim south of Strasbourg they fared less well. Six hundred Anabaptists were executed here during the first years of the Reformation. By the time the first wave of emigrants from the state of Bern arrived during the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) there were still remnants of the earlier groups.

A letter dated March 12, 1643, written by a Catholic minister at Sainte Marie-aux-Mines (Markirch) to a fellow priest in Metz gives the first indication of Bernese Anabaptists in Alsace. He writes that for some time they have been entering the area and holding meetings in a wood between Sainte Marie-aux-Mines and Sélestat. He says they met here in a barn. For special occasions ministers from Switzerland would come. In another document the Anabaptists are mentioned as settling in the middle section of the Vosges mountains in the valley of Sainte Marie-aux-Mines where they were farmers, living especially from cattle raising.²² During the extremely difficult times from 1671 until 1711 several hundred Anabaptists left Bern to find a new home in Alsace. A Bernese patrician, Beat Fischer, aided them in founding a settlement in 1671 at Reichsweyer near Rappersweyer.^{22a}

The names of some of the families that migrated from the state of Bern to Alsace during this period are Liechti, Ummel, Reusser, Bigler, Eicher, Stauffer, Wittmer, Lüthi, Lehmann, Kropf,

²¹ Geiser, *op. cit.*, 416, 417.

²² *Archives Départementales du Haut Rhin*, E2792, E2024.

^{22a} Staatsarchiv Bern. R. M. August 24, September 22, and October 23, 1671.

Bachmann, Müller, Eymann, Roth, Schneider, Wenger, Blaser, Graber, Kauffmann, Haueter, Joder, Neuhaus(er), Luginbühl (Lugbull), Richard, Stoll, Sommer, and Mosimann.²³

Palatinate

As early as 1527 we read of the work of Hans Denck at Worms and Landau where he founded Anabaptist fellowships.²⁴ Anabaptist teaching took root especially in the area near Bruchsal and in the Alzey district. As in the other lands of the south Germanic tongue where Anabaptists were located in the sixteenth century, here in the Palatinate they suffered persecution in the form of mandates, executions, and banishment. Some migrated to Moravia where they were gladly taken in by the Hutterite Anabaptists. By the time the emigration from Switzerland started (about 1650) there were few or none of the native Anabaptist stock left in the Palatinate to greet them.

During the Thirty Years War the Palatinate was laid waste and nearly depopulated. Persons who had been banished before were now welcomed back. Religious persecutees from France and Switzerland were invited to rebuild the devastated land. As persecution was taking place in Switzerland at that time a number of families left for the Palatinate.²⁵ They settled as early as 1652 in the Kraichgau (Northern Baden today) especially in the districts of Sinsheim a.d. Elsenz, Hilsbach, and Reihen.²⁶

At first the Anabaptists were merely tolerated on the east side of the Rhine. Their economic contribution was appreciated but their religion was always a source of fear for the state-church government. Finally they were permitted to stay by paying a tax of six gulden (\$90) per person each year. They were permitted to hold meetings only if the number of those taking part was twenty or less.²⁷

²³ Ch. Mathiot, *Recherches Historiques sur les Anabaptistes de l' Ancienne Principauté de Montbéliard, d' Alsace et des Régions voisines*. (Belfort, 1922), 150-158.

²⁴ Christian Hege, *Die Täufer in der Kurpfalz* (Frankfurt a. M., 1908), 13ff.

²⁵ The Palatinate included a portion of present-day north Baden located on the east side of the Rhine. This included the cities of Heidelberg, Mannheim, and Sinsheim a.d. Elsenz.

²⁶ Christian Hege, "Kraichgau," *Mennonitisches Lexikon* II (Weierhof, 1925), 555.

²⁷ Christian Hege, "Kurpfalz," *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, II, 588-597 *passim*.

As early as 1650 Swiss Anabaptists arrived at Kriegsheim on the west side of the Rhine.²⁸ Others arrived from Switzerland in the years following but no sizable migration took place until 1671 when an especially severe persecution took place in both Zürich and Bern. It has been estimated that approximately 700 persons arrived in the Palatinate during this year from the state of Bern.²⁹ Several letters have been preserved telling of the desperate conditions of these immigrant Anabaptists during this time. Jacob Everling, a minister at Obersülzen near Dirmstein, wrote letters to the Mennonites in Holland describing the conditions in which they came. By November 2, 1671, he reported, 200 had entered the Palatinate. Among them were cripples, old persons up to 90 years of age, and families with as many as twelve children. Most came without money or possessions and carried all they owned on their backs, and their small children in their arms. By January, 1672, Everling reported, there were some 643 in the Palatinate. When asked why they had not left Switzerland earlier they gave the following reasons: first, they saw that despite all persecutions their numbers were continually increasing, and their church "bloomed as a rose among thorns"; second, it was not easy to immigrate to a foreign country and leave behind many close relatives who were not members of their faith.³⁰

As the native Mennonites in the Palatinate had little means of their own they could not assist the immigrants to a great extent. Letters were written to the brethren in Holland requesting aid. Tielmann Jansz van Braght, a Dutch Mennonite minister and author, visited the Palatinate and saw the conditions just as had been described by Everling. Already in 1660 the Dutch Mennonites had formed an organization to aid their Swiss brethren, the Committee for Foreign Needs. Eleven thousand gulden (\$150,000) were given by the Dutch Mennonites for their aid.³¹

In the years following, the life of the Swiss Mennonites in the Palatinate was not easy. They were never considered on equal legal standing with the other persons there. Continually there was

²⁸ Walter Fellman, "Kriegsheim," *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, II, 572.

²⁹ See note 17.

³⁰ Müller, *op. cit.*, 194-197.

³¹ Christian Hege, "Kurpfalz," *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, II, 597, 598.

some law of restriction to cause them anxiety. Some moved on to Holland in 1710 where they formed settlements at Groningen, Sappenmeer, and Kampen. For several generations they retained their language and distinctive church regulations but by the beginning of the nineteenth century they joined the Dutch Mennonites so that today only a few names can be recognized as being of Swiss origin such as Boer (Baur), Gerber, Meihuizen, and Latscha (Lörtscher). Even as early as 1671 some Mennonites of Swiss origin, from the Palatinate, had settled at Sappenmeer and Groningen, so that those who arrived in the eighteenth century were referred to as "new Swiss." In 1720 they formed two separate church organizations, those arriving later being more conservative than the earlier settlers. The division lasted until about 1780. In 1824 the entire Swiss group joined with the Dutch Mennonites.³²

The first emigrants from the Palatinate to leave for America left from Kriegsheim in 1685. Two brothers, Peter and Isaac Schuhmacher,³³ joined the Germantown, Pennsylvania, Mennonite-Quaker settlement that had been founded by persons from Krefeld two years earlier.³⁴ However, the Mennonite stream of emigration did not begin until 1707, when a number of families arrived at Germantown. Later this settlement spread north into the Skip-pack region. The largest migration of Swiss Mennonites to America took place between 1717 and 1732 when approximately 3,000 emigrated from the Palatinate to Pennsylvania to form the bulwark of the major group of Mennonite churches in America today, namely, the (old) Mennonite Church and the (Old Order) Amish Mennonite Church, both of which have spread across the United States and Canada.³⁵ The difficult times in the Palatinate together with the cordial invitation of the Penns to religious persecutees to

³² Müller, *op. cit.*, 279ff.

³³ Possibly descendants of the earlier Schuhmacher family of Safenwil, Aargau. See J. Heiz, *Täufer im Aargau (Taschenbuch des historischen Gesellschaft des Kantons Aargau)*, (Aarau, 1902), 158.

³⁴ Smith, C. Henry, *The Mennonite Immigration to Pennsylvania in the Eighteenth Century* (Norristown, Pa.), 75-94. It is certain, however, that these and all other emigrants from Kriegsheim and the Palatinate to Pennsylvania before 1707 were Quakers. Although they had once been Mennonites, they were members of the Kriegsheim Quaker congregation which emigrated en masse and all joined the Quaker congregation at Germantown. The first real Mennonites to emigrate from the Palatinate to Pennsylvania were members of the Kolb family who arrived in Germantown in 1707.

³⁵ Smith, *op. cit.*, 96.

settle in their colony, as well as favorable letters from their brethren who had left before, helped many to decide to migrate to Pennsylvania.

The Palatinate emigration took on a more definite form when in Rotterdam a group of 300 assembled to make the trip to America. Leading this movement were Jacob Burkhalter and Benedict Brechbühl. The Dutch Mennonites gave considerable aid to their brethren and even aided a few in paying their passage. For ten years only a scattered few left for America but in 1727 another wave of emigration started that continued unabated for five years. Regardless of discouragement and warnings from the Dutch Mennonites and admonishings from the Palatinate elders the "America fever" spread through the Palatinate churches, nearly depleting them by 1732 when the stream of emigration came practically to a close. During these five years alone the Dutch Mennonites recorded some 3,000 Palatinate brethren having passed through Holland en route to Pennsylvania. Christian Hege estimated the Mennonites in America descended from these Swiss settlers at 150,000 in 1935.⁸⁶

The Palatinate Mennonites also had representatives in the migration to Jülich and Cleve during the latter part of the seventeenth century, and in the decade of the 1780's a sizable number left for Galicia where they settled in the area of Lemberg.⁸⁷ The settlements in Jülich and Cleve died out in the nineteenth century, but the one in Galicia persisted until 1945 when it was expelled by the Russian occupation; after a period of existence in West Germany as refugees the remnant of this group migrated to Uruguay in 1949.

Those who remained in the Palatinate had their own difficulties, both external and internal, although they enjoyed a period of prosperity in the nineteenth century. The Amish schism affected them in 1693-1700. Although the Amish group never was large, it persisted until the 1930's when the last Amish congregation joined the Palatinate Mennonite conference. The government restricted their worship and freedom well into the nineteenth century.

⁸⁶ Christian Neff, "Amerika," *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, I, 51, 52. Christian Hege, "Kurpfalz," *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, II, 599.

⁸⁷ Bachmann, Peter, *Mennoniten in Kleinpolen*, 177ff.

Today there are approximately 1500 baptized members of the Mennonite Church in the Palatinate.

*Bishopric of Basel*³⁸

The present stronghold of the Anabaptists in Switzerland is the Bernese Jura, which, until the French Revolution, was called the Principality and Bishopric of Basel. Only a portion of it was allied to the Bernese state by defensive and offensive alliances signed in 1486. This territory originated in the year 630 as an ecclesiastical legacy. In 1528, when the Reformation came and won part of his people, the Bishop changed his place of residence from Basel to Porrentruy (Pruntrut), although the greater share of his principality remained Catholic. In exception to the general rule in Catholic states the Bishopric of Basel early gave semi-toleration to the Anabaptists fleeing persecution in the state of Bern.

Tradition has it that during Reformation times Bernese Anabaptists sought protection in the Bucheggberg in Solothurn territory but when their safety here became uncertain they moved on into the Bishopric of Basel, coming first to Péry, north of Biel, and settling in the mountain meadows of the Montoz. From there they moved to the mountains of Graiter and Münster. From Péry others moved westward forming for some time the churches of Wannen and Tschanner. Between 1540 and 1570 the first families arrived.³⁹ The Gerber family came from Stadel near Langnau; the Nussbaum family from Ichertswil in the Bucheggberg district of Solothurn, and a Tanner family probably from Lützelflüh. These were the first in this migration.⁴⁰

But it appears that even earlier than this Anabaptists existed in the Bishopric of Basel. The first evidence of an Anabaptist being in this area is given by the list of those who attended the debate in Bern in March, 1538, in which appears Hans Heinrich Schneider

³⁸ Now usually referred to as *Fürstbistum Basel*. The ruler was not only Bishop of a diocese but prince of a secular domain as well. The terms *Fürstbischof* and *Fürstbistum* were never used until after the French Revolution when the Bishopric and Principality arrangement no longer existed. The title that was earlier used was *Bischof von Basel, Fürst des heiligen Römischen Reiches*. The area that he ruled was called *Stift, Hochstift, Bistum* or *Fürstentum*. See A. Membrez, "Das Hungerjahr 1771 in Fürstentum Basel," *Der Rauracher* XII, No. 3/4 (Aesch, Basel-Land, 1940), 37.

³⁹ Müller, *op. cit.*, 234, 235.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 235.

from Münstertal.⁴¹ On August 17, 1538, the Bernese government wrote to the Prince Bishop of Basel that he should not tolerate the Anabaptists in his domain; rather, he should expel those who were in the Münstertal. It appears that these earlier Anabaptists were not Bernese in origin but rather Alsatian. The records are silent from this time until June, 1596, when the Prince Bishop Jakob Christoph wrote to the prior and church at Münster that the Anabaptists in Seehof have increased rather than decreased as the case should have been. He decreed that no more should be allowed to settle there without the Bishop's previous knowledge of it.⁴² The records are silent for another quarter of a century until in 1622 when Bishop Wilhelm gave authority to the prefect of Delémont (Delsberg) to imprison Heini Stähli who was living at Seehof.⁴³

Various conditions forbade the Anabaptists to find refuge in the Jura during the especially difficult persecution times of the 1670's and 1690's. On March 10, 1693, the Prince decreed that no Anabaptists may settle in his land.⁴⁴ The larger migrations to the Jura which nearly depleted the Emmental churches took place in the fore part of the eighteenth century. This will be discussed in the following chapter.

*Amman-Reist Controversy*⁴⁵

Although persecution made life for the Anabaptists of Bern nearly impossible during the last half of the seventeenth century they nevertheless found occasion to disagree among themselves. This division in the Bernese Anabaptist ranks became the greatest in all the history of Swiss Anabaptism, continuing to the present day in America, although in Europe it has been healed everywhere so that no Amish are left in Europe. The cause and course of the division follows.

⁴¹ U. P. 80.

⁴² Staatsarchiv Bern. Ehemaliges Archiv des Fürstbistum Basel. 245. Mappe 29 June 11, 1596. (This portion of the Staatsarchiv is hereafter referred to only by the letter B followed by the section number.)

⁴³ B 245. Mappe 29. May 20, 1622.

⁴⁴ Geiser, *op. cit.*, 446.

⁴⁵ The most thorough study to date on this subject was made by Milton Gascho, "The Amish Division of 1693-1697 in Switzerland and Alsace," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XI (October, 1937), 235-266.

An Anabaptist elder named Jakob Amman from Erlenbach near Thun^{45a} made a tour of the various Anabaptist congregations in Bern and Alsace in the year 1693, accompanied by several other Anabaptist ministers. It was his sincere belief that the congregations were becoming lax in the practice of true Christian ordinances; so he sought to reinstate a stricter church discipline, stressing a firmer policy on the principle of avoidance of persons no longer in fellowship with the church. This was probably imported from the practice and teaching of the Dutch Mennonites, since previously in the Bernese Anabaptist congregations avoidance had always been interpreted as nonparticipation of the banned member in Holy Communion. In all sincerity he endeavored to reform the Anabaptist congregations over an older and stricter pattern.

Amman first came to the bishop Niklaus Moser in Friedersmatt near Bowil and then to Peter Giger in Reutenen near Zäziwil, both in the Emmental. Neither of these showed interest in introducing the strict avoidance into their congregations. Some time later a number of elders and ministers met at the home of Niklaus Moser to discuss and decide what to do. Hans Reist (called Hüsli Hans), an elder from Obertal near Zäziwil, was also invited but did not attend. Amman accused Reist of being a plotter against this doctrine and insisted that he should be excommunicated. In spite of urgent pleadings he excommunicated all those who would not join with him. The opposing party came to be known as the Reist or Emmental party.⁴⁶ The teachings of Amman thus were rejected in the Emmental but found fertile soil in the Bernese Oberland where in 1711 his followers were found in the Simmental, Frutigen, and Hilterfingen and in the vicinity of Thun.⁴⁷

Several years after the division footwashing was introduced into the services of the Amish group as a part of the Lord's Supper. Greater strictness in the plainness of costume also followed.

The Amish division spread at once to the churches in Alsace and the Palatinate where it found better soil. On March 3, 1694, seven ministers from the Palatinate and nine from Switzerland met

^{45a} See Delbert Gratz, "The Home of Jacob Amman," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XXV, (April, 1951), 137-9.

⁴⁶ Gascho, *op. cit.*

⁴⁷ Müller, *op. cit.*, 316.

at the mill at Ahnen in Alsace for the purpose of coming to an agreement. It was to no avail as was also the meeting held at Ste. Marie-aux-Mines on November 8, 1697.

Amman wrote a letter to the Swiss brethren on February 7, 1700, admitting that he was in the wrong and asking for forgiveness. But the Reist party had become too embittered toward the Amish methods to forgive all that had taken place upon mere request. They required cancellation of the ban but it was not forthcoming.⁴⁸ As a consequence the schism became permanent.

Both groups figured in the migrations that followed in the eighteenth century. The first Amish appeared in America in the second or third decade of the eighteenth century settling in eastern Pennsylvania. Many descendants of these immigrants joined the Mennonite Church in the first part of the twentieth century, although approximately one half of them still practice the doctrine of avoidance much as Jakob Amman preached it over 250 years ago. These latter are usually known as Old Amish or Old Order Amish and comprise a membership of some 15,380 (1952) baptized members having congregations located principally in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, and Kansas. The nineteenth-century Amish emigrants from Alsace, Hesse, and other parts of Germany, who settled largely in the mid-western states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa, and in Ontario, were more progressive and have almost all joined the Mennonite Church, very few continuing with the Old Order Amish group.

The churches in Alsace became Amish and remained so. Within the past half century, however, they have modified their views so that today there is almost no distinction between them and the Mennonite groups in Switzerland and South Germany. In the Palatinate the last Amish church joined with the Mennonite conference in 1935. After 1750 only three small Amish congregations existed in Switzerland. One was located at Binningen near Basel, most of whose members, however, lived just across the border in Alsace. The meetinghouse, however, has always been in Basel. The two other Amish churches in Switzerland were in the Jura, namely, Chaux d' Abel, and Val de Ruz in the Principality of Neuchâtel. The stronghold of the Amish party in Bern had been in the Ober-

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 316, 317.

land. The deportation of 1710 and subsequent migrations to the Bishopric of Basel extinguished these congregations. During the nineteenth century there was a continual process of ever closer co-operation between the Reist and Amish groups in the Jura. By the end of the century only slight remains of the Amish group existed. They had never prospered on Bernese soil.

Location of Anabaptists in Bern

As the seventeenth century progressed the center of Bernese Anabaptism became ever more the Emmental. Remnants were still left in the various other counties in Bern, especially in the lower Aargau in the northeastern part of the country. The greatest expansion in numbers took place in the Oberland and Thun areas.

The lower Aargau was under Bernese rule until the French Revolution. During the sixteenth century most of the Bernese Anabaptists migrating to Moravia came from this section. During the early seventeenth century congregations existed in some number in the Aargau, but the severe persecutions that raged in Bernese territory during the latter half of the century all but annihilated these congregations. Most families found new homes in Alsace and the Palatinate at this time. The few remaining left during the forepart of the eighteenth century. Some of the family names of modern Mennonites of Aargau origin in Alsace, the Palatinate, and America are Zimmerli, Suter, Bachmann, Schuhmacher, Hauri, Herdi, Thut, Engel, Berner, Frey, Peter, Meyer, Beck, Aerni, Gross, Amsler, Hunziker, Bär, Hegi, Gut, Rot, Fehlmann, Bolliger, Müller, Burger, Küenzli, Däster, Glur, Jäggi, Schärer, von Huben, Dätwyler, Lütwyler, Gautschi.⁴⁹

The exact circumstances concerning the expansion of the Anabaptists in the Thun and Oberland regions of Bern during the seventeenth century are not clearly known. Very likely these congregations were a growth of the small scattered groups that were in existence there since Reformation times. Then too it is natural to infer that contacts made at the markets by the Emmental Anabaptists also helped spread the movement. The peak in numbers came just prior to the wave of persecution which swept through

⁴⁹ Heiz, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

the Bernese state during the decade of 1670. Following this most of them migrated with the Emmental group to Alsace and the Palatinate. Those that remained joined the Amish movement in the last decade of the century. Practically all left with the deportation of 1710 when they went to the Palatinate, Holland, and later many to America.

The lonely valleys of the Emmental became more and more the stronghold of Bernese Anabaptism during the seventeenth century. Despite persecution and migration the numbers grew until the extremely severe times of the 1670's. In almost every village there were a few Anabaptists. In the dark valleys there were more. Names of Emmental Anabaptist families in the seventeenth century include the following: Baumgartner of Dürsrütti near Langnau, Probst, Friedrich, Bichsel, Ruch, Studer, Otzenberger, Jost, Däl-
lenbach, Räber, Krayenbühl, Gerber at Gohl, Röthlisberger at Multen, Burkhalter at Mättenberg, Fischer from Signau, Bürki at Gibel, Wahli, Steiner in the Ey near Langnau, Gerber in Wannen-
enthal, Gerber on the Wisenholen, Bracher in Frittenbach, Wiss-
ler in Eyschachen, Grimm at Gibel, Stauffer from Eggiwil, Schwartz in Mos, Schänck in Mülibach, Blaser at Walistolen, Tanner at Walistolen, Hofmann from Affoltern, Aeschlimann at Rigenen, Bieri at Katzbach, Gerber at Wingei, Kohler from Hasli, Schüppbach from Hasli, Jau in Heimiswilgraben, Reist at Hinter-
brittern, Reist at Oberthal, Sterchi, Schenk, Räss at Schangnau, Lüthi in Längenbachmühle near Lauperswil, Wiedmer from Mützel-
enberg, Wälti at Schwanden by Rüderswil, Zaugg from Signau, Mumprecht from Rüegsau, Frider from Biglen, Christen from Langnau, Liechti, Ummel, Neuenschwander, Wütrich.⁵⁰

In the Thun area the following family names were found among the Anabaptists in the latter part of the seventeenth century and early eighteenth: Schnyder from Eriz, Neuhaus in Goldenwil, Müller, Himmelberg from Wattenwil, Kropf at Langenegg, Müller, Stägmann, Liebe, Eichacher, Ruchti, Frutiger from Oberhofen, Meier from Sigriswil, Frutiger from Sigriswil, Ruff from Sigriswil, Reusser from Hilterfingen, von Gunten from Sigriswil, Ritschard from Hilterfingen, Jenni from Hilterfingen, Himmelberg from Wattenwil, Schlappach from Oberdiessbach, Schlappach from

⁵⁰ Based on list of emigrants of 1711. See Müller, *op. cit.*, 307-309.

Eriz, Eicher from Schwarzenegg, Lörtscher from Latterbach, Steiner from Diessbach, Kneubühl from Diessbach, Kuenzi from Diessbach, Krähenbühl from Diessbach, Rubeli from Diessbach, Rüeßegger from Diessbach, Aeschbacher from Barbersried, Roth from Diessbach, Stöckli, Gerber, Aeschbacher from Diessbach, Tschabold from Steffisburg, Büler, Streit, Gautschi, Peter.⁵¹

From the Oberland the following names were represented among the Anabaptists: Anken from Spiez, Amman from Erlenbach, Zahler from Frutigen, Krebs from Reutigen, Richen from Frutigen, Thönen from Reutigen, Simon from Reutigen, Schallenberger from Erlenbach, Stähli from Hilterfingen, Stucki from Diemtigen, Schilling from Oberhofen, Furer from Oberhofen, Bauer from Oberhofen, Rubi from Frutigen, Maier from Siebenthal, Zürcher from Frutigen, Trachsel from Frutigen, Kallen from Frutigen, Bucher from Reichenbach, Frei from Hilterfingen, Lörtscher from Hilterfingen, Thönen from Frutigen, Kratzer from Aeschi, Barben from Spiez, Kröppli from Spiez, Stutzmann from Spiez, Gerber from Thun, Wenger from Thierachern, Richen from Frutigen.⁵²

Anabaptist families in the Schwarzenburg area included the following: Gasser, Stöckli, Hostettler, and Binggeli.

Besides the Anabaptists themselves there was during this time a group called "half-Anabaptists" (*Halbtäufer*). They were persons who were convinced of the Anabaptist beliefs but in the face of persecution were not willing to actually join. They would usually keep nominal membership in the state church although attend Anabaptist meetings as well. Just how many there were in Bern is not known but some ministers expressed the fear that if Anabaptism would be tolerated these "half-Anabaptists" would join the Anabaptists and outnumber the state-church members in some parishes. During times of persecution they were a great aid to the Anabaptists as they would give them protection and food as well as warn them in the face of danger. However, they were not the only ones who would aid the persecuted Anabaptists as many others would give them assistance if for no other reason than their dislike for the corrupt state church clergy.⁵³

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 310, 311.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 309, 310.

⁵³ Horsch, *op. cit.*, 392-396.

Life of the Bernese Anabaptists in the Seventeenth Century

That the daily conduct of the Bernese Anabaptists was on a far higher plane than that of their state-church neighbors was admitted openly by even some of the Reformed clergy. So their attack was made rather on the Anabaptist theology. But continually the point was raised by the clergy themselves as well as by state officials that there should be a higher standard of conduct among the clergy. So it was that, through the influence of the Anabaptists together with the clergy's disgust with the actions of some of its members, at various times impetus was given to cleanse and purify their own ranks. The Anabaptists' neighbors in the Emmental had only the highest regard for them. This factor made it very difficult to exterminate them because the Bernese authorities could never fully rely on even the local officials to carry out their orders.

Much of the rural populace thought of the Anabaptists as saints and persons who had experienced true salvation. Since it was a common belief that to join the Anabaptists was the most certain way to attain salvation, their ranks ever increased despite severe persecution.⁵⁴ Even some of the hardened Anabaptist hunters were converted to Anabaptism.

One state-church minister from the Emmental wrote that they are "quiet, retired people with a clear conscience." He also wrote that they pray much, give alms, fast often, pay their taxes, bless their persecutors, hold to the ban and avoid the company of open sinners, and use their conscience in partaking in all things. Neither did they eat nor drink to excess nor wear expensive clothing nor spend much time at play. They held strictly to nonresistance. The author of the book went so far as to advise his people to follow the good example of the Anabaptists in their own lives, but advised them not to follow their doctrine.⁵⁵ The same minister described

⁵⁴ Georgius Thormannus, V.(erbum) D.(ivini) M.(inister), *Probiere Stein Oder Schrifttenmässige . . . Gewissenhafte Prüfung Dess Täuferthums . . .* (Bern, 1693); Thormann was a state church minister at Lützelflüh, a parish in the Emmental, having not a few Anabaptists at this time. He was commissioned by the state church authorities to write a book to combat the Anabaptists' religious views which were becoming popular with the people. In this volume the author does not try to raise antagonism but rather admits the better ethics of the Anabaptists over the state church. In so doing Thormann has left the only clear picture of Anabaptism in the state of Bern of this period. His arguments are directed against Anabaptist theology but seem weak in the face of the good that is said about them. A copy of the book is in the Goshen College Library.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 7, 9, 10.

the Anabaptists as being poor and unlearned handworkers who often have no more than two books besides the Bible but can preach with more earnestness and get more results than ministers of the state church.⁵⁶

By the end of the seventeenth century few Anabaptists risked living in the villages. Most of them were located in the high valleys leading from the Emmental. Here life was difficult. Practically all of the farm work was done by hand on the steep slopes. These hardships helped condition them for the further difficulties that lay ahead in the Jura and on the American frontier.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

IV

Bernese Anabaptism in the Eighteenth Century

Introduction

The story of eighteenth-century Bernese Anabaptism is one of further persecution and migration. Early in the century a systematic deportation took place. At the turn of the century a special commission was set up by the Bernese government to take care of all Anabaptist matters. By the middle of the century this was done away with and certain toleration was shown to the few remaining in Bernese territory. The deportation took many to the Palatinate and Holland. But more migrated to the Bishopric of Basel where a greater degree of toleration was shown them. The story of their life and struggle for existence in the Jura is one of the noblest in all of Anabaptist history. Toward the end of the century the French Revolution came to Switzerland, breaking down all of the old institutions and supposedly giving freedom to all who did not have it before. By 1798 the Bernese Anabaptists were given constitutional freedom and recognition but in actual practice this was not fully realized until half a century later.

Persecution

In 1699 the Anabaptist Commission (*Täuferkammer*) replaced the Commission for Anabaptist Matters (*Kommittierte zum Täufergeschäft*) which had been in existence since 1659. This was composed of five secular members whose chief task was to look after the confiscated estates of the Anabaptists. They also had supervision over the administration of mandates and orders issued by the Bernese government concerning the Anabaptists. It was for them to say who was to be banished, who might be released, and the length of prison sentence that each Anabaptist might receive. This commission lasted until December 4, 1743, when it was disbanded.¹

¹ Ernst Müller, *Geschichte der Bernischen Täufer* (Frauenfeld, 1895), 337.

This revised Anabaptist Commission ordered an Anabaptist hunt (*Täuferjagd*) in 1702 in the Emmental. The efforts of the hunters were frustrated when the majority of the populace aided the Anabaptists to escape through various signals, as blowing horns, shooting, calling, and the like. In Sumiswald on April 24, 1714, between sixty and seventy Anabaptists were released from prison through mob action of the sympathetic residents. For this the commune had to pay a fine of 100 Taler (\$2,000). But this was not the only time that misfortune befell the Anabaptist hunters. In 1726 they chased three Anabaptist women across the border into Lucerne territory but instead of stopping at the state boundary they continued the chase and caught them. This led to a long legal battle between Lucerne and Bern. The final result was that the Anabaptist hunters had to pay 100 Taler (\$2,000) to the Lucerne government. Evidence shows that this money was reimbursed to them later by the Bernese government.² Even the district governors were not always in sympathy with the Anabaptist hunters. The Bernese government won little respect for the questionable procedure of hiring some of the worst rogues to hunt down a people whom the greater share of the populace considered good neighbors, or even at the worst, quite harmless and quite undeserving of treatment as criminals.³

Banishment came to the fore during the early part of the eighteenth century as the means of getting rid of the Anabaptists who remained. Though the original plan of taking them to America in 1710 failed, most of those who were forced to leave at this time did not return to Bern. The details of this forced migration will be discussed under a following topic.

During the same period that the Anabaptist hunters were the terror of the Anabaptists a number of orders and mandates were issued against the Anabaptists who remained, ever making it more and more difficult for them to exist in Bernese territory. On September 30, 1711, shortly after the migration to Holland, the old mandates were again enforced and the punishment was to be greater for those who still remained. The last ones were to be brought to prison and put in chains until they recanted or agreed to accept

² *Staatsarchiv Bern. Luzern Buch J*, 50-55.

³ Christian Neff, "Bern," *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, I, 189.

the Reformed religion. On May 24, 1714, another mandate appeared in which it was admitted that despite the past migration and punishments there still existed Anabaptists in Bernese territory. They stated that forgiveness was always in order for those who recanted but able-bodied men who would return from banishment would be punished by being sold as galley slaves and the others were to be punished just as severely in other ways. But this mandate had few results. Soon after this another order went out that 100 Taler (\$2,000) would be paid to any person who would capture an Anabaptist minister and 50 Taler (\$1,000) would be paid to any person who would capture an Anabaptist deacon. For the seizure of a male member they paid 30 Kronen (\$500) and for a female member 15 (\$250).⁴

A list of books was made which were forbidden to be sold or found in one's possession. Among these was the Froschauer Bible, first printed at Zürich in 1524-29 and reprinted often there and at Basel, and in 1744 at Strassburg and greatly loved by the Anabaptists.

As in past centuries the children of Anabaptist parents were to be considered illegitimate because the parents were not married by the Reformed minister. As such they were not permitted to inherit their parents' estates. But in 1721 a slight amendment was made so that children of a father who was exiled were permitted to have his property, thus keeping them from becoming public charges.⁵

In 1715 a ruling was passed that the money derived from the selling of Anabaptist estates should be divided equally between the Anabaptist Commission, the Bernese Council, and the local supervisory officials. In 1729 this was changed so that the individual communes should receive this money to apply on their school and church costs. A special register was kept called the Anabaptist Record of Property (*Täufer Urbar*) in which these financial matters were kept.⁶ Only through permission of the Anabaptist Council could any of this money be spent. Through this record one can get a good view of the very limited economic resources of the Anabaptists of that period. The list of confiscated goods together with

⁴ *Mandatenbuch. Schloss Trachselwald.* August 20 and September 9, 1718.

⁵ *Mandatenbuch des Schlosses Sumiswald,* May 17, 1722.

⁶ *Täufer Urbar.* Staatsarchiv, Bern. B III, 196.

its value is given. One can also ascertain their geographical location in the early eighteenth century from this record.

By 1720 there seemed to be a lessening in the severe policy carried on in the first two decades of the century. In that year a law was created whereby an Anabaptist was permitted to take his property with him when migrating if he would take an oath never to return. A short time later others were permitted to return under special restrictions. At the same time some Anabaptists were condemned to life imprisonment. In 1729 the Anabaptist Commission renewed and expanded a law of 1695 which forbade the Anabaptists to bury their dead in regular cemeteries. Many were buried on their own farms or some very out-of-the-way place.⁷

On December 4, 1743, the Anabaptist Commission was disbanded and with it came an end to the severe persecution of the previous two centuries. At the same time the Anabaptist hunters vanished from the picture. But the Anabaptist's legal position in the Bernese state was quite indefinite. It remained so for the next one hundred years. The first conflict to arise was the matter of military service. It was decided in 1737 that the Anabaptists refusing military service should be sent to work in the silver mines. But this was never enforced. In 1745 it was ordered that those who failed to appear at the army call should be fined from twenty to thirty Talers (\$300 to \$450). In 1780 they were threatened with banishment, but shortly after, it was ordered that each person refusing military service must clothe and arm a young poor soldier. But this also was not enforced. A plan in 1786 to compel each Anabaptist liable to military service to work a month per year at helping the poor to do their harvest also never worked out.⁸

By the 1760's some of the communal governments were willing to give certificates of citizenship (*Heimatschein*) to Anabaptist families requesting them. Others were refused at this time but by 1790 it was the general practice of the communes to recognize a person of Anabaptist descent or faith as a citizen of the community from which his family originally came. Especially during the turbulent times of the French Revolution period did those living in

⁷ (Samuel Geiser, ed.) *Die Taufgesinnten-Gemeinden* (Karlsruhe, 1931), 416, 417.

⁸ Müller, *op. cit.*, 360-363.

French territory make special efforts to obtain certificates of citizenship in order to prove their Bernese citizenship rights.⁹

The formal recognition and toleration given to the Anabaptists in 1798 by the constitution of the French puppet state, the (Swiss) Helvetic Republic, will be discussed in the chapter on the nineteenth century as it ties in more closely with the whole chain of events which follow during that century.

Migrations in the Eighteenth Century

THE THWARTED DEPORTATION OF 1710

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the Bernese government was in a quandary as to what action to take regarding the Anabaptists. The mandates and laws had removed many but because of their rapid growth it seemed as though the government was making no headway. Because of a famine many who had been deported to Alsace returned at this time. So it was the problem of the Bernese government to get rid of the remaining numbers in a manner that would not invite the disdain of their Bernese subjects or bring severe criticism from foreign governments.

On May 17, 1699, the first serious action was taken toward the deportation of the Bernese Anabaptists. The government of Bern wrote a letter to the Dutch East India Company in Amsterdam asking whether it would be possible to make arrangements to ship all the Bernese Anabaptists to an island in the East Indies. The hope was to send them to some remote place in order to make it impossible for them to return as they had always done before when banished to neighboring lands. It does not appear that this letter was answered.¹⁰

Again there appeared a move to deport the Bernese Anabaptists from Europe in 1710. At this time the prisons in Bern were full of them and a solution was urgently sought. This year might be considered the climax of the persecution during the eighteenth century. Existing correspondence from this period verifies this fact. An Anabaptist from Mannheim secretly visited

⁹ For an explanation of the Heimatrecht and Heimatschein see infra, pp. 77, 78.

¹⁰ *Missivenbücher*, May 17, 1699.

the prisoners and wrote a long letter describing their conditions.¹¹ The Netherlands consul in Bern wrote of the conditions to a person in Holland about the same time.¹² In 1709 a contract was made by the Bernese government with a man named Ritter to transport a number of poor folks and Anabaptists to America. For each Anabaptist that he actually transported to America he was to receive 45 Taler (\$900) which was to be taken from the estates of the Anabaptists who were leaving. Ritter was to accompany them to Carolina. Any who would return were to be punished with the death penalty. It is stated in the Council Manual (*Ratsmanual*) that the Anabaptists were desired by the King of England to populate his American domain. Permission from Great Britain was easily obtained, and all was made ready for the journey on March 18, 1710. But in the last hour the French Ambassador and also the Prussian representative demanded that proper transit visas be obtained for them to sail down the Rhine to Holland. The government of Basel was asked to furnish an enclosed place near the Rhine where they might keep the Anabaptists during their changing of boats. But not until shortly before they left did they think to seek permission from the Dutch government to permit them not only transit but also to grant a place there to keep them during the time they would wait on a boat for America so that they would have no chance of escaping. But the Dutch government was not inclined to aid in this deportation of persons whom they considered to be of good character. They answered the request saying that as soon as the Anabaptists set foot on Dutch soil they would be free and permitted to do what they pleased. Further, they answered that never would the Dutch government lift their hand to hurt them.¹³

Under military escort fifty-six Anabaptists were actually put on board ship at Bern on March 18. One person died in prison before leaving and another escaped in Basel. Thirty-two persons were freed at Mannheim on March 28 as they were old, feeble, or sick. The remaining twenty-two arrived at Nijmegen, Holland, on April 6. Through the efforts of government officials and pressure from the Dutch Mennonites they were released on April 9. They were

¹¹ Müller, *op. cit.*, 255-257. Copy of letter.

¹² *Ibid.*, 257, 258. Copy of letter.

¹³ Müller, *op. cit.*, 252-267.

very happy when they were received by their brethren in Nijmegen led by the minister, Heinrich Laurens. They were in great need of relief as most of them had served long terms in Bernese prisons where food was very meager. Added to this was a very difficult eighteen-day journey on the water. As they had lived for a year or two on just bread and water they were not able to eat meat or other solid foods. The Amsterdam church gave sums of money to help them on their way. They were not satisfied to stay long to recuperate but were anxious to return to the Palatinate where most of them had their families. Three of them went to Amsterdam to report the entire situation to the Mennonite Commission there. These were Benedicht Brechbühl, a minister and elder from Trachselwald; Hans Bürki, a deacon from Langnau; and Melchior Zahler, a deacon from Frutigen. The reports of their experiences have been preserved and give a very good picture of the persecution of the Bernese Anabaptists in the early part of the eighteenth century. The Dutch government in Amsterdam also questioned these men especially as to why the Anabaptists continued to be persecuted in Bern. Their three points of difference with the Bernese government were: first, they denied that the government is ordained of God; second, they would not take an oath; and third, they refused to bear arms for their country. Instead of bearing arms they said they would do work on fortifications during wartime. The Dutch government again sent a plea to the Bernese council for more tolerance in their dealings with the Anabaptists. They asked them to permit the Anabaptists enough time to sell their land and leave the country with their possessions. About the same time the Dutch Mennonites sent a request to the Bernese Embassy which included: (1) Permission for the wives and children to accompany the men who were to be sent to America. (2) Permission for those now imprisoned to migrate. (3) Cessation of further hunting of Anabaptists.¹⁴

After leaving Nijmegen the exiles went to Cleve where they met their Mennonite brethren. There, too, the sentiments and sympathy for them were great. Isak Vranken, the minister at Cleve, and the deacons arranged to aid them with food, clothing, and money. They stayed several days and on Sunday their ministers were asked to preach in the Cleve church. Although they were not

¹⁴ Geiser, *op. cit.*, 429-434.

understood it is said that they made a deep impression on the brethren at Cleve. Vranken wrote to the Committee at Amsterdam that he found these people very well versed in the Scriptures and very humble and without hypocrisy.¹⁵

Most of the Swiss exiles returned to the Palatinate but some braved the dangers of severe punishment and returned to their homes in Bern. So ended the story of the deportation that miscarried. Mr. Ritter who was promised 45 Taler (\$900) for each Anabaptist whom he deported to America was left without money and friends for the failure of his efforts. The boatman was given 130 Taler (\$2,600) by the Bernese consul at the Hague to aid him in getting back to Switzerland. Although the project failed in taking the Anabaptists to America it did succeed in that most of them never returned to further plague the Bernese government.

MIGRATION TO THE NETHERLANDS IN 1711

Negotiations continued between Holland and Bern over the problem of the Bernese Anabaptists. The main characters in these discussions were François Louis Pesme, the Lord of St. Saphorin, the Bernese envoy in Amsterdam and the Dutch consul in Bern named Runckel. At Bern Runckel pleaded with the Council to be tolerant toward the Anabaptists but if this was not possible to at least permit them to have a respite for several years during which time they could sell their estates and be permitted to leave the land with their possessions.

By July, 1710, all parties were agreed that the only solution was emigration. But the question now was—where? The Princess of Nassau and the Count of Wied asked for some who were artisans or craftsmen, but nearly all of them were farmers. The Prussian King Wilhelm I wanted to take all of them with open arms. Runckel suggested that they be settled in two swamp areas within Bernese territory, but Brechbühl, who seemed to be the leader and main contact man of the Bernese Anabaptists, considered this plan impossible to carry through. The opinion seemed to be more and more that the Netherlands was the place for them to go. Henceforth the Dutch Mennonites worked with great zeal to aid them to come to the Netherlands and once there they could choose where they

¹⁵ Müller, *op. cit.*, 276.

eventually wanted to settle. First, they collected a sum of 50,000 gulden (\$500,000) for this purpose. They also wrote a letter to their imprisoned brethren in Bern; at the time there were fifty-two. Runckel reported on October 1, 1710, that conditions had greatly improved for the imprisoned. They were permitted to have a Bible and a few other books, there was enough to eat, but sleeping conditions remained very poor.¹⁶

By December 10 the number of imprisoned Anabaptist men and women was 295. At this time Runckel made a plea to the Bernese government which included: (1) Freedom to choose whether they wanted to migrate to Holland or Prussia. (2) A general amnesty so that all the Anabaptists could come out in the open and sell their goods before leaving. (3) Appointment of someone to care for their possessions which they would not be able to sell before leaving. (4) Freedom for all those who were at present in prison. (5) Permission for those married to members of the Reformed church to take their non-Anabaptist marriage partners and children with them. (6) Exemption from the ordinary tax that was collected from all who emigrated.¹⁷

With much work on the part of Runckel and backed by the Dutch Mennonites, a pardon was finally granted the imprisoned Anabaptists in Bern on February 11, 1711. In the amnesty order it was admitted in the first sentence that all attempted methods to extinguish the Anabaptists from Bern had failed, and that contrary to hopes they had gained in numbers. Reformed children and marriage partners of Anabaptists were given the privilege to leave as the others with their goods but had at the same time to forfeit their claim to Bernese citizenship. They would be permitted to go to Holland and then to Prussia, but they would not be allowed to go to Neuchâtel, then a Prussian possession. But Anabaptist meetings were still strictly forbidden as was also the return of any person who would leave at this time. Each prisoner that was to be released must pay 25 Reichstaler (\$500) for the expense of keeping him in prison. This was not allowed to be paid for by the Dutch Mennonites. If the family was not steadfastly Anabaptist they must pay the regular 10 per cent departure tax that all Bernese emi-

¹⁶ Müller, *op. cit.*, 295.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 294.

grants paid at that time. If any property was taken out without permission severe punishment was to be given.¹⁸

The direction of the transport was given by the Dutch Menonites to Ritter, the man who directed the migration as far as Nijmegen the year before. He was to receive five good boats that would transport 500 persons. The transportation was to cost the Anabaptists 3,215 Reichstaler (\$270,000). Duty free passage was arranged before time with the officials at Basel, Trier, Köln, Hessen-Kassel, and Prussia.¹⁹

But many of the Anabaptists did not want to leave. The followers of Hans Reist and Jakob Amman did not want to travel together. Hans Gerber, who did not want to leave, was sentenced as a slave to the Venetian galleys.²⁰

The day of leaving was set for July 13, 1711. The destination was Amsterdam. Runckel, in connection with Daniel Richen, an Anabaptist who was very helpful in this project, and Ritter, had many problems through which they led the group. The worth of the estates the Anabaptists left behind was valued at 600,000 pounds (\$3,000,000). 28,500 gulden (\$290,000) were given to the Menonites in Holland as proceeds from the sales by the Anabaptist commission. 14,000 gulden (\$570,000) the Anabaptists took with them. Runckel had some 18,135 gulden (\$750,000) for the aid of the Bernese Anabaptists.²¹

As the number did not come up to the expected 500, other passengers were taken along. The embarkation actually took place on July 13 as planned both at Neuchâtel and at Bern. At Wangen the ships met. Here one Anabaptist escaped, contrary to his oath. On July 16 the ships arrived at Basel where roofs were put on the ships and supplies replenished. Hans Bürki and Samuel Reber joined the group here. They had been sentenced to life imprisonment for returning to Bern after they had promised not to do so, but at the last moment they were released to sail with the rest. They did not want to go but through the aid of the Basel government were put in chains and in this manner taken to Holland. As the

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 299.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 301.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 300.

²¹ *Ibid.*

group filled only four ships the fifth one was left behind at Basel to be used later for a similar purpose, which was never necessary. Four of the Anabaptists who had been in prison took the opportunity to leave at Basel. After a stay of three days in Basel the four boats set sail down the Rhine. It was not easy for the exiles to see the last view of the Jura Mountains pass into the distance. A sadness came over them which was not taken away by the thoughts of entering a land where the freedom of worship would be guaranteed. Despite the cruelty of the government few of them really wanted to leave. Already at Breisach Hans Bürki and twelve others took the opportunity to leave the boats and found their way to coreligionists in Alsace near by. Later some of these found their way back to their beloved valleys of Bern. At Mannheim Samuel Reber with some thirty others left the ships to be with their brethren in the Palatinate. The boats passed Mainz, Koblenz, Köln, Düsseldorf, and Wesel in their journey down the Rhine without difficulty. At Emmerich they were met by Abraham Fortgens who brought them a greeting of welcome from their Holland brethren. They sailed past the Dutch border and also the city of Utrecht. On August 3, 1711, they docked at Muiden where they were met and greeted by a number of men from Amsterdam and that same evening some of them arrived at Amsterdam. The number of Bernese Anabaptists that arrived was 340 children, between 80 and 90 men, and from 90 to 100 women. They were quartered in a large room in a warehouse on the Zandhoek. During their last days' stay in Amsterdam they were moved to a barracks where there were beds, blankets, and necessary equipment to prepare meals. The sick and weak received special care here. In every respect they received a very hospitable welcome. So large was the welcome of the people of Amsterdam that great numbers of the citizens went to the barracks to see them. So many went, in fact, that the entrance was controlled by traffic police. Collection boxes set up at the entrance were filled with 1,045 gulden (\$43,000) in gifts from friends that came. For fourteen days the Bernese Anabaptists were guests of their Amsterdam brethren. The Dutch Mennonite relief committee who sponsored this overwhelming welcome was composed of the following: Willem van Maurik, Hermanus Schijn, Jan Willink,

Abraham Jacobs Fries, Job Sieuwerts, Jacob Vorsterman, Jan Honnoré, and Cornelis Beets.²²

It is interesting to note that the majority of the Bernese Anabaptists who arrived at Amsterdam were of the Amish faction while the greater share of those who left at various points during the journey were of the Reist group.²³ Reasons for this are not given. Possibly the Amish group had fewer close relatives in the Palatinate as they were of the Oberland congregations, few of whom had migrated before. Then, too, it could be that they were more conscientious in keeping their promise given to the Bernese authorities to go to Amsterdam.

The question now arose as to where a definite home could be found. Representatives of the Bernese brethren who had gone to Prussia in search of a new home for the group upon the invitation of King Frederick I had as yet not returned. The leaders of the new Swiss immigrants spoke against Prussian colonization. After much deliberation twenty families of about 100 persons went to Groningen to settle. The remainder were taken to Deventer and Kampen where they were to remain at least until the following May. On August 20 the boats took them to their destinations. Twenty-one went to Harlingen, 126 to Groningen, 87 to Kampen, 116 to Deventer. This made a total of 350. At Groningen they were greeted by the ministers and members of the Old Flemish church of Mennonites and the combined Flemish and Waterlander Mennonite churches. The conditions here were very fortunate for the immigrants as prices for land were very low because of a crop failure which took place in 1709. Farm workers, too, were in great demand. Besides Groningen they also settled in the near-by villages of Sappemeer and Hoogkerk. In the year 1721 the Groningen church wrote to the Amsterdam Committee that no more of the Bernese needed to be given aid. Some of these later migrated to Pennsylvania.

The committee which had been sent to Prussia, of which Benedicht Brechbühl was a member, sent a letter from Danzig on August 12, 1711, to Amsterdam. They gave a picture of the conditions in Lithuania, the fruitfulness of the land, the good terms

²² *Ibid.*, 300-306.

²³ *Ibid.*, 307.

which the king offered, the great kindness afforded them by their brethren in Danzig and Elbing. The architecture of the houses did not appeal to them but the king promised them the needed wood from the state forests to build their own type of buildings. There were 62 estates of about 30 morgen (63 acres) each, of productive land, to be had for 25 to 30 Reichstaler (\$500 to \$600) each. The return trip and a visit with the king in Berlin brought them to Amsterdam on September 8. They reported their good findings to their Bernese brethren in Holland but found none deeply interested. The opinion was that now they wanted to settle down and earn their own living so as to make no further expense to their Dutch brethren. Brechbühl favored strongly the Prussian colonization and during the years that followed several Bernese Anabaptist churches were established there. In 1720 and especially in 1730 these churches were in great need and most of them moved to Germany, Netherlands, or North America.²⁴

Each year immediately following the 1711 migration a few families from Bern joined their brethren in Holland. The persecution did not let up. The year 1714 was an especially difficult one. During this year sixteen Anabaptist families left Gontenschwil near Lenzburg for Holland. They settled near Groningen.²⁵

At Groningen and Sappemeer the Bernese Anabaptists formed churches of their own. As early as 1671 Swiss Anabaptists from the Palatinate had settled near Groningen and were locally known as the "*Pfälzer*." Those who came in 1711 inherited this name, joining the earlier settlers in one congregation. But soon differences arose, among which was the complaint by a minister concerning the fancy style of another minister's house. So they divided in 1720, forming two congregations known as the "new Swiss" and the "old Swiss." Each had about fifty members at Groningen, but the division also extended to Sappemeer. During the last quarter of the century the two groups reunited. At about the same time German was discontinued as the language for their services. In 1815 when the native Dutch Mennonite divisions called the Waterlanders and the Old Flemish joined and built a new church building, the Swiss started using the old building for their services. In 1824

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 319-328.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 322.

the history of a separate Swiss Anabaptist church came to a close when they joined the Dutch Mennonites in Groningen. But the Bernese names remain among the families of the congregation up to the present time. Some of them are: Leutscher (Lörtscher), Hofmann, Rubin, Richen, Gerber, Meihuizen (Peter from Maihausen), Boer (Bauer). The history of the Sappemeer church was parallel with that of Groningen.²⁶

At Kampen a man named Cramer looked after the settlement of the Bernese Anabaptists. By November, 1711, he had bought ten large estates and eight small ones and rented land to go with them. Here most of the families settled. The rest settled in town. By 1717 a report of very prosperous conditions was given. This group held its meetings in the houses until the latter part of the century when they bought a building in Kampen. In 1822 they joined with the local Mennonite church, thus ending their existence as a separate Swiss Anabaptist congregation. Kampen names denoting Swiss background are Gerber, Maurer, Krebs, Holzmann, Hübscher, and Thönen.²⁷

Some 106 persons were brought to Deventer on August 10, 1711. It seems that this settlement did not prosper as did the others, for most of the settlers later moved to Groningen and Kampen to their brethren. Nothing is mentioned in the records concerning an organized Swiss church. Nor do any family names remain in the local Mennonite church at Deventer today which would denote a Bernese connection.²⁸

Those few exiles who belonged to the Reist faction went to the vicinity of Harlingen but the following spring asked the Dutch Mennonite relief committee for money so that they could leave Friesland for the Palatinate. They were refused but through their own means left on November 13, 1713, for the Palatinate. When the Anabaptists suffered persecution in the Palatinate a few years later most of these fled to America. The reason for their discontent in Holland was that there were so few of the Reist people there and they found it impossible to fellowship with the Amish group. So they anxiously went to join their brethren at Mannheim and vicinity.²⁹

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 322-328.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 324, 325.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 325.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 325, 326.

The Amman group carried with them to Holland all their customs and rules of conduct. They held strictly to simplicity in all things, industry, and thrift. The men wore long beards, had straps on their shoes, and used only hooks and eyes on their clothing. They held strictly to the ordinance of shunning excommunicated members as taught by Jacob Amman. They did not go to excess in eating and drinking, nor did they use tobacco. But tolerance and freedom as they had here did not work to keep the church strict and highly disciplined. After the first generation of leaders passed on changes took place rapidly. By the end of the century their language gave way to the local Dutch and by the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century the last differences were erased and they were a part of the Dutch Mennonite church. Only a few old patriarchs remained with their beards and peculiar cut of dress to remind the younger generation of deep convictions that had caused their own ancestors to choose leaving their homeland rather than compromise their faith.⁸⁰

PRUSSIA (INCLUDING NEUCHATEL)

As early as 1526 there were Anabaptists in the city of Marienburg. In the latter part of the sixteenth century when persecution took place in Holland many Dutch Anabaptists moved to eastern Prussia. Menno Simons, the foremost of the Dutch Anabaptist elders, visited this area during the third and fourth decades of the sixteenth century and aided in founding congregations there.⁸¹

The first knowledge we have of connections that the Bernese Anabaptists had with Prussia was in 1710. Frederick I, the king of Prussia, tried to repopulate Lithuania with good subjects after it had been emptied of its populace through war and plagues. His envoys in The Hague and Hamburg reported to the king that they had heard of the plight of the Bernese Anabaptists through the local Mennonites who asked him to use his authority to ease their situation. Immediately the king had his envoy in Bern, Bondeli, make an offer to the Bernese Anabaptists that he would take them all in his land and guarantee their religious freedom as well as

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 327, 328.

⁸¹ Brons, *Ursprung, Geschichte, und Schicksale der Altevangelischen Taufgesinnten oder Mennoniten*, 3rd Ed. (Norden, 1912), 228.

release them from military duty. In the summer and fall of 1710 the Prussian government made the following terms to Bern for taking their Anabaptists: (1) The Anabaptists should have the freedom to emigrate with their possessions. (2) They should be brought to the border of Prussia at the expense of the Prussian government. (3) A deputation of Anabaptists should be named to examine carefully the possibilities of migration to Prussia.⁸²

In November, 1710, Bern agreed to the following: (1) Anabaptists who moved to Prussia would have to pay a ten per cent tax on the estate that they would take along. They would automatically lose their right of citizenship. (2) For those not having possessions the government would see to it that they got as far as Frankfurt am Main. (3) They would not permit a deputation of Bernese Anabaptists to go to Prussia to make arrangements. They suggested that all preparations should be done through the Anabaptists in Holland and Hamburg. (4) The council added that they hoped suitable places could be found to please the Anabaptists so they would not be tempted to return to their homeland.⁸³

Through Dutch aid several Bernese Anabaptists, of which Benedicht Brechbühl was one, were able to go to Prussia to investigate. They went as far as Lithuania. In Berlin they conferred with Frederick I. They returned to Holland with a very good impression of the country and encouraged their brethren to move. For various reasons only a few persons actually ever went.⁸⁴

In another connection Bern came in contact with the Prussian government concerning Anabaptist affairs. Neighboring Neuchâtel, although having a loose affiliation with the Swiss federation, was not a republic like Bern but rather a principality under the Prussian crown. Neuchâtel complained in 1734-1735 to Bern that because of persecution of non-Reformed elements such as the Anabaptists in Bern, members of these sects were infiltrating into Neuchâtel and endangering their church. Bern assured the government of Neuchâtel that they were anxious to co-operate in every possible way to help them get rid of the Anabaptists. During each persecution in Bern during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a few

⁸² *Stadtbibliothek Bern. Mss. Hist. Helv. XI. 8. Schärer, Allgemeine Völkergeschichte in Bezug auf die schweizerischen Aus- und Einwanderungen.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ See page 63.

families found their way to neighboring Neuchâtel for refuge. They settled in the Val de Ruz and in the neighborhood of La Chaux-de-Fonds and Le Locle. As in the Bishopric of Basel they became the pioneers of the area in agriculture and cattle breeding. Their good fortune aroused the jealousy of the natives so that an economic struggle arose similar to that in the Bishopric of Basel. Similar problems arose in the two places at the same time.³⁵

Although the local Neuchâtel officials tried to get rid of the Anabaptists, the king of Prussia, their ruler, declared in 1734 that these people should be tolerated as their records were good and they lived as orderly citizens. He ordered that they should not be persecuted. But the local agitation against them went on and it was decided that all of them should leave at the beginning of 1736 from the district of Valangin. However, few families actually left.³⁶

Through all these difficulties, the Neuchâtel settlements of Anabaptists carried on although they never prospered as greatly as was the case with those in the neighboring Bishopric of Basel. From the widely scattered farm homes they would gather on Sunday for services in a large room of a farm house. For a long time the central point was at the hamlet called Les Bressels near Le Locle. Not until 1896 was a meetinghouse erected for this congregation at Les Bulles near La Chaux-de-Fonds. Although no large number ever migrated, this group also contributed to the migration of the nineteenth century to America. The congregation was from the eighteenth century on an adherent to the Amish wing. The names Stähli, Ramseyer, Ummel, Müller, and Glaus are found among this group.³⁷

America

Of the various emigrations of Bernese Anabaptists during the eighteenth century, those going to America had as their goal the English colony of Pennsylvania which the Penns had some years before (1681) thrown open to immigrants, encouraging especially religious persecutees. The first family arrived in 1710, going directly to what is now Lancaster County.

³⁵ Maurice Dummont, *Les anabaptistes en pays neuchâtelois, passim*. Unpublished MS. (Neuchâtel, 1937).

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.* See also Samuel Geiser, "Neuenburg," *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, III, 208, 209.

In 1717 when the Palatinate Mennonites were very hard pressed by their rulers they turned their thoughts toward the colony of Pennsylvania where some of their brethren had gone as early as 1678. They asked the Dutch Mennonite relief committee for assistance. 4,000 gulden (\$40,000) were put at their disposal. The first migration left in the spring of 1717 from Rotterdam under the leadership of Benedicht Brechbühl. The migrations grew to such proportions that the Dutch could no longer afford to give aid to all. By 1732 it is estimated that some 3,000 persons from the Palatinate had passed through Rotterdam on their way to Pennsylvania. Some of these were Reformed and Lutheran church members seeking to better their conditions in a new land, but most of them were Mennonites.

The story of the migration of Bernese Anabaptists from the Palatinate to Pennsylvania has been discussed at some length earlier in this study.³⁸

Others left for America direct from the Jura Mountains in the 1750's. The story of their adventures and difficult times is told in the section on the Bishopric of Basel.³⁹

Only a few scattered families left direct from Bernese territory in the eighteenth century for America. These left from the Emmental. As there were only scattered families and not an organized migration the traces of these are very scant.⁴⁰

Migration to the Bishopric of Basel

The first large number of Bernese Anabaptists to find refuge in the Jura went there from the Emmental in the early eighteenth century. Each time the Bernese government attempted to rid itself completely of the Anabaptists within its borders the migration to the Jura Mountains gained in numbers. In reports of 1716 and 1720 they are mentioned to have been numerous in the St. Immortal, near Tramelan and in Grandval. The year 1730 marked the high point of the migration. At first some would only remain during the summer, going to the Bucheggberg in Solothurn for the winter.

³⁸ See pp. 41, 42.

³⁹ See pp. 85, 86.

⁴⁰ Müller, *op. cit.*, 365.

But here in the Jura they were little more welcome than in the land they had just left. Already in 1723 there were complaints against them. The natives of the church district of Corgémont attempted to expel the Anabaptists from their area on the following grounds: (1) They do not attend divine services. (2) Their children must be compelled by the officials to be baptized. (3) They buy up the hay so that the natives have little or must pay very dearly for what they get. (4) There are more cattle on the communal pasture on the Sonnenberg than before the Anabaptists came. (5) The Anabaptists and other foreigners clear much woods and make fences on the mountains in order to sow turnips, carrots, potatoes, and cabbage. They burn the soil. By their excessive cultivation the communal meadows are injured. (6) Formerly the oxen from the villages were taken to the Sonnenberg to pasture. The dairy farmers up there drive the oxen away so that now a special pasture has been made for them. (7) The Anabaptists use so much wood on their dairy farms that in a short time the woods will be depleted. Then they will use from the prince's forest which would do great harm. In brief, these people are of no use at all to the commune.⁴¹

The communes in the Erguel were requested to complete lists of the Anabaptists in 1726. The communes of Sonvilier, Renan, and Les Montagnes complained especially and it appears that to a certain extent the Anabaptists were forced to leave this section of the Jura. The owners of the land then had their turn to complain. They wrote that through the expulsion of the Anabaptists they were greatly harmed. They were then obliged to rent to the natives. The landed persons would not rent and those without land were a poor financial risk. Besides this the stony terrain required much laborious manual labor. They said that the natives of Erguel were not inclined to do this type of work as were the Anabaptists.⁴²

Early in 1725 a list of rules was decreed which the Anabaptists and other foreigners living in Erguel had to obey. They were as follows: (1) They must promise to obey all the laws of the prince and the officials as well as the constitution and the laws of

⁴¹ B 187. *Mappe* 23. May 10, 1723.

⁴² B 187. *Mappe* 23. *Passim*.

the country. (2) If they hear a plot against the authorities they must tell it at once. They are to work for the advantage and not for the disadvantage of the country. (3) They must promise not to teach their doctrines nor hold open meetings. (4) They must pay the resident tax and all other public charges. (5) They must promise to leave the country immediately if ordered to do so. (6) They must not recognize any other governmental authority. They must go security one for the other.⁴³

The communes of La Ferrière and Sonvilier in the parish of St. Imier complained on May 13, 1726, as follows against the Anabaptists: "Since several years ago numerous foreigners called Anabaptists or Pietists have slipped into the land of your highness and dwell in St. Imier. They rent estates and dairy farms. This is against the interests of your highness and also your subjects. Please have them leave. Our complaints are as follows: (1) They rent land at a very high price, higher than the natives can pay. Only the rich landowners profit. (2) These folks do almost no plowing and sowing. This makes the tithe much less. The tithe administrators complain.⁴⁴ (3) The Anabaptists or Pietists⁴⁵ give a bad example to the natives in matters of religion. They never attend public church services. They don't even worship on Sunday. They hold meetings at night, secretly at different places, nobody knows where or when. It is possible that they might foment division and revolution. (4) Their conduct is especially dangerous for our young people. The Anabaptists could draw some of our serious-minded people to their sect. Experience has proved this several times. (5) These folks have no authentic documents from their home commune. They have been expelled from their home because of their rebellious attitude. (6) They have not given any oath to your highness and are not willing to take oath to defend the fatherland. They do not pay the residence tax and do not contribute anything to the poor fund. (7) If allowed to stay here they would draw a large number of others to come. It would be a great damage to the natives and could start a rebellion."⁴⁶

⁴³ B 187. *Mappe* 23. Early 1725.

⁴⁴ The tithes were rented to persons whose business it was to gather them. If the tenth proved to be more than what they had paid to the prince, they gained, but if it was less, they lost.

⁴⁵ Although there were Pietists in Switzerland at this time none appear to have been here.

⁴⁶ B 187. *Mappe* 23. May 13, 1726.

On March 25, 1729, the five communes of the St. Imier parish, namely, St. Imier, Sonvilier, Villeret, Renan, and Les Montagnes, sent a further plea to the prince to rid their area of Anabaptists and Pietists. The reasons they gave for their request were as follows: (1) The Anabaptists pay very high rent, much higher than the subjects are able to pay. The foreigners yield to this and find supplementary work outside of their farming. Because of this the food prices become higher as more people come into the land. (2) These foreigners carry on little agriculture. Through this the grain tithe becomes smaller. This situation increases as the foreign population grows. (3) As renters the foreigners take away the homes of the subjects. They leave no feed for the cattle of the natives. As they bring in cattle from abroad they harm the market. (4) They give the subjects a very poor example in religious views in that they attend no religious services. Neither do they hallow Sunday and the Holy Days. (5) At night they hold secret meetings here and there. If there should be among them bad persons it would be likely that stealing might be carried on. (6) The more numerous they become the more the forests are harmed as they use a great amount of wood for their cheese making. (7) Furthermore, they have come here from their fatherland as expellees because of their stubbornness. They could not get along with the Bernese subjects in religion and politics. (8) In times of danger to the state they would be a great liability as they will not carry arms nor will they swear an oath of allegiance. For these reasons it is requested that these persons be expelled in accordance with an order of March 10, 1693.⁴⁷

Under this pressure from his subjects Prince Johann Conrad gave out the order on November 30, 1730, that the Anabaptists and Pietists must leave the land at the end of the renting year.⁴⁸

Further complaints came from the Münstertal. A request from the communes of Roches, Perrefitte, and Montagne de Moutier asked for the expulsion of the Anabaptists, who they said, occupy a large portion of the farms, and so make the native population homeless and unemployed. They made reference to an agreement of 1711 in which it was agreed that only the Protestant re-

⁴⁷ B 187. *Mappe* 23. March 25, 1729.

⁴⁸ B 245. *Mappe* 29¹. November 30, 1730.

ligion would be tolerated there except below Les Roches where only the Catholic faith could be practiced. The complaint was also registered that the Anabaptists worked on Sunday and that they used too much wood from the forests.⁴⁹ This was verified by the council of the city of Solothurn. In a writing it was mentioned that there were also Anabaptists living in the Solothurn dominion of Falkenstein lying on the border of the Bishopric of Basel who hold meetings in the Münstertal.⁵⁰ To this the bishop answered that upon the request of the people in Erguel he had already ordered the expulsion of the Anabaptists, but had so far tolerated them while they had not proselyted among his subjects.⁵¹

At the same time the officials of Delsberg wrote to the bishop. They said there were two points of view represented in their district concerning this question. The landless requested the expulsion of the Anabaptists while the landowners said they would be harmed if this should happen. The landowners claimed that it was their ancient right to choose whom they wanted for their renters. The rulers of Bern who visited the Protestant church in the Delsberg area each year were of the opinion that the Anabaptists should be tolerated. There were forty-three families in the area. Against their meetings they had nothing to say. But if the expulsion was to be carried out in earnest they were to wait until the expiration of the renting time so that the landowners could find other renters. Also the renters who were nearly all weavers wanted permission to get together a reserve of yarn. That was not possible to do before September or October.⁵²

But the following year (1732) it seems the Anabaptists were still in their Jura homes as further complaints came to the ears of the bishop who evidently did not press his order of expulsion. The commune of Tramelan sent a plea to the bishop that the Anabaptists should either be expelled or then taxed by the commune as they did not aid in the upkeep of the roads, and gave no wood for the building of water conduits but at the same time made the food more expensive. Johann Conrad decreed that 7½ Batzen (\$5.00) tax be paid yearly to the commune and also the same amount to the bishop.⁵³

⁴⁹ B 245. *Mappe* 29. March 6, 1731.

⁵⁰ B 245. *Mappe* 29. March 28, 1731.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, April 23, 1731.

⁵² *Ibid.*, April 26, 1731.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, March 6, 1731-1734.

A plea from the communes of Roche, Perrefitte, and La Montagne de Moutier was written on June 6, 1732, to the bishop protesting that the Anabaptists made living conditions impossible for the natives. They stated that the previous Tuesday five families had to leave because they could no longer make a living and many others were preparing to leave. The Anabaptists, they said, should be expelled so that the faithful subjects would have room.⁵⁴

George Moschard, chief secular officer of the District of Moutier, described vividly the folly of expelling the Anabaptists. He argued that they bring money into the land, they work land that would produce nothing without them, they live very modestly, they do not visit saloons nor give cause for anyone to complain. They pay rents double the amount ordinarily paid by the natives.⁵⁵

But just a week later (June 27) another protest was made by the Delsberg residents in which they said the Anabaptists were a profit to the rich and a ruination of the poor. The latter could not find any more land to rent. Besides this, they said the Anabaptists are a scandalous sect because it is a known fact that they bury their own dead in gardens or in the forest. They concluded that perhaps secret murders were committed by them. Also the fact that their meetings were held in secret cast reflections on what might go on at them.⁵⁶

The communes of the Münstertal made a joint plea to the bishop on January 15, 1733, to expel the Anabaptists.⁵⁷ Pleading letters were also sent at the same time by Moutier-Grandval and the nineteen communes in the district of Moutier. Only a lone letter was sent by the commune of Court in their favor.⁵⁸

Under this pressure which had been carried on for the past several years Prince Johann Conrad felt he could do nothing but carry out the wishes of his native subjects. On January 27, 1733, he issued an order of expulsion of sectarians and Anabaptists. Those who were not renters or were not under other special contracts were to leave within three months from the date of issue. Renters and those under contract were given a year to leave. This document was issued by the prince in his castle at Pruntrut.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, June 6, 1732.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, June 19, 1732.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, June 27, 1732.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, January 15, 1733.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1733.

⁵⁹ B 245. *Mappe* 29¹. January 27, 1733.

The commune of Court declared they were much against the expulsion and pleaded for a respite in January, 1734. This meant much because there were some twenty Anabaptist families in this commune.⁶⁰

An Anabaptist recorded how they responded to this order. Many of them stopped working. They wept and prayed and did not know what to do. An eminent official went to the prince and appealed to him in their behalf. The official told the prince that these people were not harming the land but rather they were a great benefit to it as they farmed land which would not otherwise be cultivated; that the government received a tenth of their produce; and that they farmed the land correctly and thus were able to pay more rent which in turn helps the landowners to better meet their obligations. Because of this protest and others the prince did as he had done concerning his mandate of expulsion of 1730. He did not enforce it. In appreciation for this semi-toleration the Anabaptists presented the prince with a particularly fine piece of linen. Whenever a new prince was elected a similar gift was given to him.⁶¹

But this did not end the question. The same conditions prevailed and much the same feelings were found among the native population. Complaints continued much in the same vein for the next thirty-five years before a more definite solution was found.

Not all, however, lacked appreciation of their Anabaptist neighbors. A letter dated January 17, 1750, from some of the more highly respected citizens, including the ministers, of the parishes of Péry and St. Imier was sent to the prince. It describes the situation of the time very well. It mentioned first that those who had advocated the expulsion of the Anabaptists some twenty years before had through their own negligence gone bankrupt and thought that by the expulsion of the Anabaptists they could again rent land cheaply. But the landowners were successful in persuading the prince not to expel them. The writers of the letter insisted that Anabaptists were of great profit to the land. Through their continual industriousness in farming or handwork, especially as weavers, through their simple living and complete abstention from luxurious

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, January 25 and January 30, 1734.

⁶¹ Samuel H. Baumgartner, *Brief Sketches of Seven Generations: Descendants of Deacon David Baumgartner* (Indianapolis, Indiana, 1908), 19.

living, tavern life, and lawsuits they were in a position to pay much higher rents than other persons.⁶²

It was also complained that when Anabaptists die who have no children their estates go to a common treasury to help their own people, which according to the person making the complaint, should by law be turned over to the government.⁶³

The lawyers of Pruntrut complained that the Anabaptists carried on their own jurisdiction. Through this, they said, it was possible for them to break laws for which the natives were punished and not be brought before the courts of justice. This made them a state within a state which could lead to bad consequences, the lawyers asserted.⁶⁴

In answer to these complaints the prince said he wanted to deal with this delicate question with the greatest intelligence and discretion. But he asserted that there had been no positive complaints against these people and so far there was no positive proof that their methods were injurious to the prince. Rather, he said, it lies much more in the interest of a sound politic that the number of these persons here be increased as much as possible and that further entry of this group into the Bishopric of Basel be encouraged.⁶⁵

Although no official order or mandate was passed stating definitely that the Anabaptists would be tolerated, these rather strong statements in favor of them given by the prince seemed to put an end to further complaints.

However, this did not insure them equal rights with their native neighbors. They were not permitted to own land but could only rent it. They were only allowed to rent land located on the high slopes or plateaus where the natives had never been able to prosper. The land here was too stony and dry and was suited to only a few crops and grazing. Neither were they allowed to live in the villages nor rent adjacent to them.⁶⁶

Another political-legal aspect of the life of the Anabaptists of the Jura of this period was that of their *Heimatrecht* (right of

⁶² B 245. *Mappe* 29¹. January 17, 1750.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, September 24, 1767.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, September 27, 1767.

⁶⁶ Abraham J. Moser, "Aus dem Leben der Schweizer Mennoniten," *Christlicher Bundesbote*, August 11, 1885.

communal citizenship). The 1670's were difficult times in Switzerland. There was a general famine in the country which caused the number of beggars to rise to dangerous proportions. They would travel from one commune to another to eke out an existence by begging, and no commune would take the responsibility to care for them. Finally the Bernese government took a hand in the matter and decided that on a set day in 1672 each Bernese must accept the communal citizenship of the commune in which he was at that moment living. The beggars were likewise to receive this communal citizenship and in turn the commune was required to provide the subsistence for those not able to do so for themselves. This system has remained up to the present day. If one moves to another commune, or to another canton, or even to a foreign country the *Heimatrecht* of his paternal family is still his even though neither he nor his ancestors for hundreds of years have returned. Only through a special act of the government or an express request of the person to the government is this citizenship lost. The Anabaptists who were exiled and forced to promise never to return automatically lost this citizenship. But those who fled to the Bishopric of Basel and others who went to Montbéliard and Alsace did not, as most of them had left without being formally exiled. By 1743 official persecution of the Anabaptists ceased in Bern. But it was still not advisable nor of any avail for them to ask for any favors from the government. But by the 1760's a few Anabaptists living abroad, i.e., Alsace or the Bishopric of Basel, had the courage to return to their home communes and request a certificate of their communal citizenship (*Heimatschein*). With this proof of citizenship most foreign regimes under which they lived did not force them to do military service. Many Mennonite families now living in France and a few in Germany have made use of this law down to the present time.

Some of the first Anabaptists who requested *Heimatschein* from their home communes in Bern were refused on the grounds that they were Anabaptists. Other cases were referred to the state government at Bern. One of the first *Heimatschein* that was issued to an Anabaptist was received by the brothers Christen and Bendicht Schrag from Läumberg near Wynigen who were living near Court in the Münstertal.⁶⁷ This was granted on October 20, 1763.

⁶⁷ R. M. 267/197.

A few others received theirs later in the same decade but more in the following two decades. By the beginning of the French Revolution practically all those in France and the Bishopric of Basel who had as yet not a *Heimatschein* quickly got one. The Bernese Anabaptist family that was willing to accept French citizenship during the French Revolution period was indeed quite rare. Often it was difficult to prove descent from a direct lineal ancestor on the male side that had lived in the home commune. Since Anabaptists were rarely recorded in the state church baptismal records before 1780 this source was rarely of value, and all manner and form of documents were produced. But more often ancestral residence would be merely verified by the word of some of the older residents who had remembered or heard of the family as being citizens of the commune. After receiving the *Heimatschein* many of the families religiously sent a record of births to the home commune in order to enable the oncoming generations to procure *Heimatscheine* of their own. Many of these original *Heimatscheine* are still to be found in Bernese Anabaptist homes in Switzerland and America.

The French Revolution brought defeat to the once proud and intolerant government of Bern. At the same time the Bishopric of Basel collapsed and all its territory was occupied by French troops. The Bishopric of Basel was annexed to France and formed into the Department du Mont Terrible. Bern was made a part of the Helvetian Republic. Land was taken from the Catholic Church and the large landowners in the Bishopric of Basel and sold to the farmers. With the cry of "liberty, equality, and fraternity" the French gave the Anabaptists some faint hope of further toleration and perhaps complete religious freedom (1789 ff.).

Religious Life of the Jura Anabaptists

Concerning the spiritual life of the Bernese Anabaptists in the Bishopric of Basel little definite is known. Complaints from the populace during the first half of the century give a few hints. It was complained that they held secret meetings at night. Another complaint was they did not observe the Sabbath nor the holy days. Still another complaint was made that they carried on mutual aid through a common treasury.

During the first half of the eighteenth century it was not possible for them to hold open meetings in the Jura. Only seldom could they meet. After work was done in the evening the families from several neighboring plateaus would make a trek of an hour or two to an inconspicuous cave or secluded ravine. Here meetings consisting of prayer, singing, and exhortation would last two or three hours. Often they would close with communion. Two such places are still pointed out by the present generation of Jura Anabaptists as being places where their ancestors worshiped during these times. One is the Geiss-Kirchlein, a cave in the cliff above Le Pichoux located in the commune of Souboz. Farther above is the present Anabaptist school and church of Le Perceux. Another place of this nature is the Anabaptist Bridge (*Täufer-Brücke* or *Le Pont des Anabaptistes*) and Anabaptist Ravine (*Täufer-Graben*) located near the crest of the Cortébertberg.

Within the church organization there was a relief fund (*Armengut*) that was built up by the property of deceased members who were childless. Through the deacons (*Armendiener*) aid was given to the needy members. A modified version of this is still in existence in some of the Jura churches. The earliest records of this work go back to 1715. Money is recorded as having been given to sick, old persons not able to support themselves, and victims of accidents. At times some were aided with their fare to migrate to America. The deacons were reimbursed for their expenses from special collections.⁶⁸ The duties of the deacon in later times also included the collecting of money and carrying on of private schools.

The religious meetings were carried on in the spirit of a closely knit family circle. When the brethren would meet before the meeting they would greet each other with the kiss of charity and say "God be with us."

The ministers and deacons were highly respected not only because of their position and their grave duties but for their personal Christian lives. Every year on Annunciation day (March 25) they would come together for a conference and discuss the church problems.

⁶⁸ The records are at the Altevangelisch-Taufgesinnten-Archiv, Jeangisboden, La Tanne, Berner Jura.

The known names of the ministers and elders in the Bishopric of Basel during the eighteenth century are as follows:

Peter Ramseier, born 1706, lived on the Münsterberg, elected minister of the word (*Diener am Wort*) in 1730 and in 1732 made elder.

Niklaus Knör from Bucheggberg, minister of the word at Plagne. Died July, 1773.

Hans Röthlisberger, lived in the commune of Corgémont, became minister in 1752 and elder in 1759.

Peter Burkhalter from Rüderswil at Büderich (Péry), was elected as minister in 1762 and 1766 as elder.

Christian Haueter at Corgémont, became minister in 1750 and elder in 1772.

Hans Lehmann, elected minister in 1761 and elder in 1772.

The following is a list of ministers together with the dates of election to this office: Peter Lehmann, 1750; Bendicht Wahli, 1760; Michael Imhof, 1761; Christian Gerber, 1761; Simon Burkhalter, 1764; Hans Geiser, 1765; Ulrich Habegger, 1764. On the same list the following two are listed as being ministers in upper Alsace (likely the Florimont region): Ulrich Bösiger, 1750; Christen Thüler, 1753.⁶⁹

Deacons (*Armendiener* or *Diener der Notdurft*) during the eighteenth century included the following: Hans Ramseier, Jakob Marti from Sumiswald living at Büderichgraben, and David Baumgartner from Langnau living at Büderichgraben. The latter was born in 1735 and died in 1819.⁷⁰

The work and responsibility of the Anabaptist ministers in the Bishopric of Basel was no small one. In fact they had under their supervision all of the activities of the Anabaptist church in Switzerland. It being an especially strong body spiritually they were at times also looked to for advice and guidance from neighboring Alsace and the Palatinate.

After the persecution in the Emmental in the first two decades and the large immigration of the second and third decades the Anabaptist church life there was all but extinguished. For several decades following 1730 the few scattered brethren in the Emmental

⁶⁹ Letter dated August 7, 1775, in the Altevangelisch-Taufgesinnten-Archiv at Jeangisboden. Hereafter referred to as A.T.A. See also Geiser, *op. cit.*, 450-452.

⁷⁰ Geiser, *op. cit.*, 452.

were served by the Jura ministry. This was no small task when one considers the distance and especially the danger involved in their traveling back and forth. It was customary for couples from the Emmental church to go to the Jura to be married by a minister there.

During the three decades following 1760 some five trips were made by elders of the Anabaptists in the Bishopric of Basel to the brethren in the Palatinate. Here they held meetings and gave admonitions. Later they were used as arbiters between two factions that had arisen.

In the spring of 1762 Peter Ramseier, Peter Oberli, and Jakob Marti traveled to the Palatinate to hold meetings among the brethren. According to a document that they brought back they had held meetings in a number of places. This was signed by twenty-five elders and ministers. They went to Freudenberg on May 16, 1762, Weierhof on May 31, 1762, Rauhof on June 13, 1762, Schafbusch and Niederrödern on June 16, 1762.⁷¹

A short time later a great revival took place among the Anabaptists in the Palatinate. Many who had only accepted the form of the Christian life as interpreted by the Anabaptists were now awakened to a new spiritual life. The pietistic Peter Weber from Hardenburg in the Palatinate seemed to be the leading spirit in this movement. He was not only active in his ministry but also in corresponding with the various ministers in trying to convince them to the same spirit that he had. But not all agreed in this movement. The elder Abraham Zeisset started a movement against it and expelled the following ministers from their office who had joined it: George and Abraham Bechtel, Jost Glück, and Jacob Krehbiel. They were not silenced through the regular established procedure which indicated that there was not an accord within the church on the matter. A conference was then called in which the ministers were to discuss and make peace among themselves. The brethren from the Jura were also invited to aid in making peace. Peter Ramseier, Jakob Marti, and Niklaus Knör went. The conference was held on October 14 and 15, 1766, at Rauhof. The meaning of baptism was the main point of difference. The more conservative party wanted to keep baptism as a mere form that

⁷¹ A.T.A., May and June, 1762.

would be administered at a certain age. The more progressive group insisted that baptism should only be administered to those who had inner convictions as well as outwardly had expressed their desire to join the church. When the Jura brethren left they thought that the two parties had come to an understanding, but a few months after they arrived home word came that strife had been renewed. This grew to such proportions that on Easter, 1767, communion was not celebrated in the entire Palatinate as the churches demanded that their ministers first make peace among themselves.⁷²

In 1770 Peter and Hans Ramseier and Hans Steiner made a trip from the Jura to the Palatinate to try to settle the dispute but to no avail. Twelve years later in 1782 Peter Ramseier went to the Palatinate for the fourth time. Accompanying him were Hans Lehmann, Benedicht Wahli, Hans Steiner, and David Baumgartner. Finally peace was attained by the disputing Palatinate brethren at a meeting at the Himmelhäuserhof.⁷³

The Economic and Social Life of the Jura Anabaptists During the Eighteenth Century

As even today, the lot of the Jura Anabaptists was not an easy one. To eke out an existence on the stony plateaus took much continuous hard work. The standard of living, although higher than that of their native neighbors, was far below what they had left in the Emmental. In fact, one can say that the only thing that was in their favor was the semitoleration given them by the Catholic prince.

The soil on the high plateaus which they were permitted to rent was not conducive to the raising of a large variety of crops. Oats, barley, potatoes, and flax were the most common crops. They carried with them the art of cheese making from the Emmental and plied it as space and resources would permit. Cheese and butter were usually sold to pay rent. During the winter months they all plied a trade such as linen weaving, basket weaving,

⁷² A.T.A., letter dated April 23, 1767, from Möllinger and Stauffer of Mannheim to the Swiss brethren.

⁷³ A.T.A., May 14, 1782. Also May 2, 1784.

spinning, wood turning, or cabinet making. Many long winter days and evenings were spent by all the members of the family working at some handicraft. Most common of these was the working of flax into linen. Besides, linen was used for clothing for themselves and they usually had some left over to sell. But during the summer all helped in the fields from daylight to dark.⁷⁴

The supply of water is never certain on the Jura plateaus. Wells can not be dug since no water veins exist. Water from the rains goes right through the porous limestone mountains down to the streams in the valleys far below. The drinking water for people and animals is caught from the roofs and stored in cisterns. This fact gave rise to a completely different type of architecture from what they were accustomed to having in the Emmental. This style, known as the Jura house, has wide and gently sloping roofs. This makes the greatest area for catching water as it falls.

The Anabaptists were only permitted to rent land away from the villages. They were also far removed from the markets. This forced them to become nearly self-sufficient so far as provisions were concerned. Only occasionally did they go to sell their cheese and linen.

Language, culture, religion, and their isolated location made them tend to keep apart from the French-speaking native population, thus forming cultural and language islands of their own.

One of the few literary productions dealing with Jura Anabaptist life in the eighteenth century concerns a visit in the 1780's to the home of an Anabaptist minister, Bendicht Wahli, by C. Meiners, professor of philosophy at the University of Göttingen. This bit of literary art gives one an insight not only into the home life and industriousness of this almost legendary character of "Täufer Bänz," but at the same time gives a description of Jura Anabaptist life of the latter eighteenth century as seen by a keen observer of the time who was in no way connected with the group. He writes:

"We took courage and after an hour and a half climb came to the home of old Benz . . . a clever Anabaptist. He lives on this part of the Jura called the Biel mountain. As he had to leave his place of birth in Canton Bern because of his religious beliefs, he built a home here. He leased his present location, which was formerly a waste, with a loan from the city

⁷⁴ Moser, *op. cit.*, August 15, 1885.

of Biel of 50 crowns (\$600) and built a comfortable and roomy house. He planted a variety of fruit trees, laid out a garden, cultivated fruitful meadows and fields and together with his children plies his old handicraft of weaving in the remaining hours. As we came to his house we found him with his children sitting at the table where they were eating breakfast. The breakfast consisted of mashed potatoes and the syrup from dried pears. Both of these were in special dishes and very tasty and clean. Although the industrious Benz is already well over 60 years old and has grey hair and beard, he is nevertheless still so robust that he can go down to Biel every day one or more times. He is one of the most esteemed ministers of the approximate 1,000 Anabaptists who are scattered over the plateaus and valleys of the Jura which belong to the city of Biel and the bishop of Basel. As both of these powers have not taken part in war for many years and as it appears they will not take part in any in the predictable future, it is possible for them to permit such a sect who considers it a sin of death to go to war and shed man's blood. Besides old Benz the Anabaptists have 25 ministers. The old prophet who received us in such a friendly way preaches nearly every Sunday and goes every third or fourth Sunday several hours distant to proclaim the word of God to his brethren. The more difficult the journey he must make, the more rich are his spiritual treasures. Ordinarily he preaches three or four hours. He told me himself that a minister (Reformed) from Zurich heard him and thought that he must have studied in his youth. He has an unbelievable knowledge of the holy scriptures and there is no scripture passage of value that is not always present for him and that he can't immediately say. Some of our party started in a high manner to discuss with him the particular tenets of his faith and we all marveled at what he said, for they had seldom heard the ideas of his sect, and especially how he knew how to use the favourable passage of the Bible. The conversation of this old, vigorous and ingenious man was for us a main source of conversation and I am convinced that this old man who has with his own hands built up and beautified a formerly unused piece of earth, and through his pioussness has comforted many souls and held them back from corruption, that much more will be his heavenly reward than many of the renowned conquerors who have destroyed whole civilizations and laid waste flourishing lands."⁷⁵

Emigrations from the Jura in the Eighteenth Century

The fear of being exiled existed among the Bernese Anabaptists in the Jura from soon after they started settling there in large numbers until about 1767. They looked toward Mont-

⁷⁵ C. Meiners, *Briefe über die Schweiz. Erster Theil* (Berlin, 1790), 208ff. Bendicht Wahli lived at the place known as Maison Blanche near Leubringen (Evilard). He was likely the son of Durs Wahli, a citizen of Ittigen in the commune of Bolligen near the city of Bern. He married Catharina Oberli and had at least four children.

béliard,⁷⁶ the Sundgau,⁷⁷ and Pennsylvania as possible places to go. Only fifteen years after they got definite word of toleration in the Bishopric of Basel another reason arose for emigration. Their numbers had grown so that by 1783 the land that they had been permitted to rent was becoming overpopulated. At this time they looked toward Prussia, inner France, the Sundgau as well as other ranges in the Bishopric of Basel.⁷⁸

Ever since 1712 when some of the Anabaptists from Ste. Marie-aux-Mines moved to the Principality of Montbéliard there had been contacts and a trickle of migration from the Emmental and the Jura to that settlement. As the Montbéliard community was entirely Amish most of the contacts were with the brethren in the Jura of the same group.

The first traces of Anabaptists in the southwestern part of the Sundgau in the region of Delle are in the decade of 1740. At first the group consisted of families who moved from the Principality of Montbéliard but soon families appeared that had previously been in the Jura.

During the uncertain period other families looked toward America where only a generation before many of their relatives had found a refuge from intolerance and fertile soil to ply their art of dairying and farming. In 1754 some six families left the district of Courtelary. The family names were Brechbühl, Liechti, Tschantz, Moser, Stauffer, and Burkhalter. The families of König, Neuenschwander, and Engel also left about the same time. At this time the sea trip was little changed from all the perils and seasickness experienced by those leaving from Holland much earlier. A letter dated December 7, 1755, was sent by Ulrich Engel, Christen Brechbühl, and Isaak Neuenschwander who were then at Donegal, Pennsylvania, to their friends and relatives in the Jura. In this letter it is mentioned that a man named King (LeRoy), formerly of Sonceboz, had left his wife and young children at Conestoga in Lancaster County, and had gone with his elder son and daughter and his farm helper, Odina from Tramelan, and other families to a place on the frontier called Shamokin. The Indians warned the

⁷⁶ At the time a principality belonging to the Duchy of Württemberg.

⁷⁷ The southern part of Alsace. At the time it included what is now the Territory of Belfort as well.

⁷⁸ A.T.A., letters of 1783.

settlement that they should leave or suffer the consequences. The settlers refused to heed this warning and some time later came an Indian attack. The homes of six families were burned, thirteen persons were killed, and the others taken captive. King was killed and his son and daughter and farm helper were taken prisoners.⁷⁹

The Bernese Anabaptists from the Jura who went to America at this time were soon amalgamated into the established Mennonite settlements in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Only scattered families of the Bernese Anabaptists found their way to America between 1755 and 1816. This was a period of wars and unsettled conditions in the English colonies which culminated in the Revolutionary War and later the War of 1812. This period was anything but conducive to American immigration. The last decade of the eighteenth century and the first decade and a half in the nineteenth century were likewise times of unrest in Europe with the French Revolution and Era of Napoleon making conditions especially difficult for nonresistant people and impossible for migration.

By 1780 the numbers of Anabaptists in the Jura had outgrown the space which they were permitted to rent. The only solution was emigration. America, the land where their relatives had gone in the beginning of the century, was closed because of war conditions. The elders of the Jura Anabaptists corresponded with the Mennonite minister Lorenz Friederich in Neuwied on the Rhine concerning possibilities for migration to Danzig, Prussia, or Holland. He in turn contacted the Amsterdam Mennonites concerning possibilities in the Amish settlements in Ostfriesland, and also the brethren in Altona concerning the possibilities in Holstein. There are no indications that any left for either of these places at this time.⁸⁰

During the years 1783 and 1784 four families from the Jura went to Limoges, France.⁸¹ A small community was established there but some years later they returned to Montbéliard and the southern Sundgau settlements.

All through this period a movement continued to southern Sundgau where especially the Lords of Florimont gave them pro-

⁷⁹ Müller, *op. cit.*, 365, 366.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 247.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

tection. This will be mentioned more fully in the sections dealing with Montbéliard and Normanvillars.

Montbéliard

The beginning of the eighteenth century found the majority of the Anabaptists in the present territory that is now France located in the valley of Ste. Marie-aux-Mines in Alsace. Names found in this Anabaptist community were: Luginbühl, Bachmann, Blank, Ioder, Hochstettler, Zimmermann, Schwartz, Rupp, Linder, Lüthi, Gerig, Gerber, Müller, Kropf, and Fahrni. In 1708 the natives of the valley of Ste. Marie-aux-Mines complained that the Anabaptists were given special privileges in that they did not have to bear arms. They made a great protest to the government. The complaints arose partly because of the prosperity of the Anabaptists through their industry and thrift. Finally, on July 24, 1712, the Alsatian Intendant, Pelletier de la Houssaye, directed the question to King Louis XIV. He received an answer from the secretary of the king, Voisin, from Fontainebleau dated August 13 stating that the king did not intend to tolerate the Anabaptists in Alsace, and directing that they should be notified through a general decree that the agreement of Münster and Osnabruck in 1648 only permitted those of the Lutheran or Reformed faith to live in Alsace. On September 9, 1712, the Intendant sent to all the local officials in Alsace an order to expel all the Anabaptists from the land without exception. They were also not permitted to settle in any other portion of the French Kingdom that was not included in the terms of the agreement of Münster and Osnabrück.⁸²

Great consternation came over the Anabaptists in Alsace. Many migrated to Montbéliard and Lorraine. Others went to the Breisgau and still others to Zweibrücken and the Palatinate. Many of those who left got a statement from their officials to the effect that they had been good citizens, had not broken the laws, and were well liked in the land but were being expelled because they were Anabaptists. But a sizable number remained. On October 23, 1727, another list of the Anabaptists in Alsace was made. The following year an order went out that the number of Anabaptists

⁸² Ch. Mathiot, *Recherches Historiques sur les Anabaptistes de l'Ancienne Principauté de Montbéliard, d'Alsace et des Régions voisines*. (Belfort, 1922), 30, 31.

was not to increase. When a child became of age he must leave or his parents must leave with him.⁸³

Montbéliard was a principality lying south and west of Alsace but belonging to the Duke of Württemberg from 1397 to 1796. Wilhelm Farel had worked here as a Reformer, and his followers had organized the Lutheran Church there. The first Anabaptists to arrive in the Principality came from Bern in the first years of the eighteenth century during persecution times. But the large numbers of Anabaptists did not appear in Montbéliard until 1712 when this became one of the chief places of refuge for those who had lived in Alsace. These came primarily from the Markirch Valley. They organized a strong church which was, as were also the Alsatian churches, of the Amish group. They moved only onto farms that belonged to Duke Leopold-Eberhard, who had procured much land because of an expropriation law. The Anabaptists were very welcome to him as they were very industrious farmers. Although the native population did not appreciate their coming the Duke gave them full protection. They were permitted to have their own cemetery, to organize their own school, and were not required to swear the oath. They were not, however, permitted to build their own church building. They felt so secure that they even started a church record in 1750.⁸⁴ This was the first church record to be started in any of the Swiss Anabaptist churches in Europe. In 1790 the minister, Samuel Stoll, and Christen Känel, led a small migration of several families to Poland where they settled. In 1793 the Montbéliard church contained 250 persons, baptized and unbaptized. The French Revolution years were trying ones for them, when Montbéliard was united to France. With this came threats that the Mennonites would have to swear the oath of allegiance and do military service. After protesting to the government they were not required to do service at this time nor later during the Napoleonic wars.⁸⁵

After the French Revolution some of the Anabaptists bought land. More and more became landowners. The German language remained the language of the Anabaptists here until the close

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 32-35.

⁸⁴ The original church record is still in the possession of the Mennonite church at Montbéliard. A copy is in the Goshen College Library. Another copy is in the possession of the author.

⁸⁵ Mathiot, *op. cit.*, 119-142.

of the nineteenth century and German services were held as late as the second decade of the twentieth century. All through the years there continued to be a trickle of migration from Switzerland and Alsace. At the same time some were lost to the Lutheran Church through intermarriage. In the second, third, and fourth decades of the nineteenth century many migrated to America. Here they formed the large Amish communities in central Illinois, New York, northwestern Ohio, and Iowa.

In a list of Anabaptists in Montbéliard made in 1759 the following Bernese families are represented: Roth from Steffisburg, Frey from Röthenbach, Schmucker from Grindelwald, Stoll, Ulli, Schindler, Bösiger from Attiswil, Mosimann from Sumiswald, Linder, Gäumann, Meyer, Krähenbühl from Röthenbach, Hablützel, Kohler from Kammen, Schlunegger from Grindelwald, Kläuer from Sumiswald, Schaad from Attiswil, Baumgartner from Kirchdorf, Eicher from Diessbach, von Kennel from Reichenbach, Dändtler, Schuhmacher, Oberli, Kauffman, Hostettler from Schwartzenburg, Fahrni, Graber and Wahli.⁸⁶

Normanvillars

By 1740 the Anabaptists were again tolerated in French territory. Some families moved outside of the Württemberg island of Montbéliard to the near-by Sundgau. Until the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 this land had been a possession of the Habsburgs, at which time it was given to France. The Anabaptists first spread to the French-speaking portion of the Sundgau called the district of Belfort which lay along the northeastern border of Montbéliard. In the southern part of this district the Lords of Florimont owned and ruled a rather large tract of land. They favored the Anabaptists and permitted them to settle in the northern part of their domain in the pond-forest region called the forest of Normanvillars. Here they improved the then existing farms and carved new ones out of the primeval forest. Although only a few of the farms are now cultivated by Anabaptists, the settlement still stands in the heart of this forest as a memorial to a once flourishing Anabaptist community.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 73-78.

The first Anabaptist families in the Normanvillars settlement of which we have definite record are that of Jacob Kaufman who lived on the farm called Rothaus (Maison Rouge) and Johannes Hilti who lived in this settlement as early as 1747.⁸⁷ The Ulrich Bösigler family was already there in 1750 and the Christen Tüler family in 1753.⁸⁸ Families continued to come to this general area during the years that followed so that by 1780 nearly every farm not connected to the villages in the communes surrounding Florimont was occupied by Anabaptists. These were Courcelles, Courtelevant, Faverois, Boron, Jonchery, Réchésy, Lepuix-Delle, Suarce, Chavanatte, Chavannes-les-Grandes, Magny, Montreux-Jeune, Bretagne, Vellescot, Grosne, Froidefontaine, and Morvillars. The center of the Anabaptists in the southern portion of the district of Belfort remained in the settlement in the forest of Normanvillars, although a considerable number were also located in the southern part of the commune of Florimont at Chateau Vert and St. André. Some of these settlers came from the Montbéliard community but more came from the settlements in the Jura.

In a report to the Intendant of Alsace sent by local officials of Belfort in 1780 a few facts are given concerning the Normanvillars settlement.

"Belfort, June 30, 1780

"I have the honor to transmit to you information concerning the circumstances of the Anabaptist families scattered in the district of Belfort. Most of the families have been here some time. They are numerous and their sect propagates rapidly. One sees their growth only a little because most of them live in the forests and on the farms and secluded homes which are removed from the villages with which they have little connection.

"They are known to be industrious and intelligent. They live in peace, do not quarrel nor use litigation and do not employ others to do their work. They do not own any land of their own. Their wealth is made up of cattle. As their children marry very young, they divide their possessions early and the resources of the father and mother are passed on to their children but they remain with their children to pass their old age in work.

"All of the Anabaptists living in this district are farmers or weavers. The former rent good farms from the nobles and gentlemen who prefer

⁸⁷ Tax lists in the archive of the Commune of Florimont.

⁸⁸ A.T.A., letter of August 7, 1775. According to *Archives départementales du Haut Rhin*, C 1284, four families arrived in 1740, 1 in 1745, 2 in 1750, 1 in 1754, 1 in 1757, 3 in 1760, 1 in 1763, 1 in 1765, and 7 in 1770's.

them to others because they receive more rent and they pay their taxes punctually. Those who are weavers lease houses away from the villages where they quietly carry on their profession. So far there are twelve families located in the forest of Normanvillars which belongs to the Lords of Florimont. The weavers do not raise the food for their own consumption. If the government decides to make restrictions on this sect in Alsace, they should start with restrictions on the weavers as they commence to get corrupt because they are less energetic.

"It is not the same with those on the farms. These make up the necessary farmers of the region. They do not seek to rent great estates, they can not be overburdened, they are preferred over other farmers because they are very exact to complete their promises and one never has lawsuits with them. It is very rare to see them discontent with their landlords.

"One good means to diminish the rate of increase of the Anabaptist families of this area would be to reduce them to the class of day laborers and prohibit them to will their possessions without first obtaining permission.

"In regard to the charges, one has no just accusation, my sir, when one says that the Anabaptists do not support themselves. They are subject to the poll tax. They pay the taxes of the owner. No farmers of the same means would pay more. They pay dearly in the form of extra toll for any exemptions. The only exemption given them, in general, is in the matter of levying provincial soldiers. M. de Blonde, subdelegate at Belfort."⁸⁹

The first list of the Anabaptist families found was compiled in 1791 because of the troop mobilization that was then taking place. In the commune of Florimont twenty-three of the ninety-seven families were Anabaptist. The following were living in the northern part of the commune called the forest of Normanvillars which by that time was almost solidly settled by Anabaptists: Charles Berner, Johannes Stauffer, Johannes Amstutz, Ulrich Thüller, Christian Luginbühl, Daniel Steiner, Peter Thüller, Ulrich Bösigler, Johannes Steiner, Peter Luginbühl, Johannes Wenger, Peter Kauffman, and Christian Christener. In the southern settlement of the commune of Florimont the families of Christian and Johannes Bösigler lived at du Fahy and the following families lived at Chateau Vert and St. André which were farmed as one unit at this time: Joseph Hilti, Johannes Lehman, Philip Hilti, Joseph Martin, Johannes Tanner, Peter Kauffman, and Johannes Mosimann.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ *Archives du Haut-Rhin*, C 1284. See also Mathiot, *op. cit.*, 106-110.

⁹⁰ *Archives de la Commune, Florimont, Contribution Mobilière*, 1791.

While the background of each of these families is not certain it is definite that they did not represent a single group that had left the same area for the same reasons as was the case with the Montbéliard Anabaptists. The families of Berner from Schafisheim, now Canton Aargau, and Luginbühl from Oberthal near Grosshöchstetten were not Anabaptists when they arrived in France. The Berner family settled at Exincourt in the Principality of Montbéliard shortly before the middle of the eighteenth century and only because several of the children married Anabaptists did it happen that a part of this family became Anabaptist.⁹¹ The Luginbühl family moved to the Principality of Montbéliard in the decade of the 1720's. But there is every indication that they were members of the Lutheran Church at Audincourt until at least 1750 and there is no record of them joining the Anabaptist group at Montbéliard until 1778. The families of Bösiger from Rumisberg, Hilti from Oberönz, and Amstutz from Sigriswil were likewise not of old Anabaptist stock although it is likely that at the time they came to Normanvillars they did belong to the church.⁹² Wenger, Steiner, Thüller, Lehmann, Mosimann, Stauffer, and Tanner indicate older Anabaptist stock from the Emmental, some of whom came via the Jura.⁹³

As was the custom with the Anabaptists of this period their meetings were held in the homes of members having a large room to accommodate such a service. Although there is no definite indication that there were two separate groups, that is Amish and Reist, there are a number of facts that lead one to believe that both groups did exist here. The Kauffman family of Maison Rouge kept in close contact with the Montbéliard church (which was Amish) in that they had their children baptized and recorded in the Montbéliard church.⁹⁴ The family of Klopfenstein which moved from the Amish community near Belfort during the fore part of the nineteenth century and also the Rich family appear to have belonged to that wing of the church.⁹⁵ That the Steiner, Luginbühl, Thüller,

⁹¹ *Taufregister Staufberg*, IV, 47, 142, 143, 158, 159.

⁹² *Grosshöchstetten Auswärtige Taufrodel*, I, 71, 94, *Taufregister Oberbipp. Auswärtige*, I, 10. *Oberönz Bürger Rodel*, I, 80. *Sigriswil Taufrodel*, 1770, 1771, 1791, etc.

⁹³ Proved by the fact that these families appear on the early lists of Anabaptists of the Bishopric of Basel. See B 187, *Mappe* 23, 1724-1725. B 245, *Mappe* 291, 1738-1740.

⁹⁴ Montbéliard Church Record, 111.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, *passim*.

Bösiger, and Schumacher families were of the Reist group is proved by the fact that upon their arrival in America they joined with the immigrants from the Jura of the same group rather than associate themselves with the Alsatian Amish communities which were established at about the same time. Neither did they ever adopt the practices of feet washing and shunning which all of the Amish churches practiced rigidly at that time.

Meetings of the Anabaptists of this region were first held in the Montreux community as far as is known. The first ministers known here were Klaus Engel at Montreux, Peter Klopfenstein at Bourogne, and Michael Müller at Chavanatte. Supposedly the families of the Normanvillars region also attended the meetings held here but there is no proof for this. In a list of ministers of the Jura the names of Ulrich Bösiger and Christian Tüller are listed as being in upper Alsace in the decade of the 1750's.⁹⁶ As these names correspond with later lists of the inhabitants of the Florimont region likely they were ministers here. About 1780 the Montreux church divided into two groups because of the great distance that many had to travel to go to meetings. The northern group formed what was known as the La Maie church, named after the main farm where they met near Belfort, and the other called the Florimont church, or in German *Blumbergerwald*.⁹⁷ Meetings of the latter group were most frequently held at the farms of Chalembert and Beuchat in the Commune of Boron, some four kilometers away from the Normanvillars settlement.⁹⁸

During the latter part of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century Hans Steiner appears to have been the leading elder of the Normanvillars brethren. It may be noted that previously he had been active in helping conciliate the division in the Palatinate.⁹⁹ As neither Steiner nor the previously mentioned Thüller and Bösiger are mentioned in the Montbéliard church record it can well be supposed that their church was separate from any Amish ties. Added to this is the close relationship that existed between Steiner and the Jura ministry. A son of Hans Steiner named Daniel became the leading elder of the church and after him

⁹⁶ A.T.A., letter of August 7, 1775.

⁹⁷ Now called *Chapelle des Fermes* located at Normanvillars.

⁹⁸ Pierre Sommer, "Historiques de Assemblées. Assemblée de Montreux. Assemblée Florimont," *Christ Seul*, Juin, 1930, 8-10.

⁹⁹ See page 82.

a grandson named Christian Steiner, the latter migrating to Ohio in 1835.^{98a}

The Anabaptists buried their deceased on their own farms since they were not permitted to use the cemeteries of the Catholic churches of the region. At Chateau Vert and also at the Ferme de la Charme (Buchwald) small Anabaptist cemeteries were once in existence.

With the coming of the last decade in the eighteenth century came the French Revolution and its overthrow of most established customs and institutions, from the rulers to the calendar. Most of the land was taken away from the Lords of Florimont and sold to persons with money and influence which later gave rise to a wealthy landholding class. The nonresistant principle of the Anabaptists was protected through the influence of such leaders of the Revolution as Robespierre. In 1792 a number of reforms were introduced that had some effect on the Anabaptists here. The recording of births, marriages, and deaths was set up as a function of the commune to be carried out in the same manner all over France. Before that time these records were only kept by the local church leaders in any manner which was deemed fit. So the Anabaptists were not recorded in most places until that time. At the same time the French Revolution calendar was introduced and used for official government reckonings but not adopted by the people in everyday use. This lasted some twelve years when it was abolished and the former system reinstated.

By the end of the eighteenth century several other Mennonite families appear in lists of inhabitants in the Normanvillars region. Some members of the Klopfenstein family moved here from near Belfort. A family named Schaker from Helbach moved here but does not appear to be of old Anabaptist stock. The family of

^{98a} An old list of the ministers and deacons of this church in the 19th century has been preserved in the flyleaf of a Froschauer Bible printed in 1556. This Bible was passed down in the Basinger family and recently placed in the Bluffton College Mennonite Historical Library.

Christen Bösiger ordained July 6, 1800.

Christian Steiner ordained July 6, 1800.

Hans Düller ordained August 25, 1805.

Christian Steiner ordained May 25, 1806.

Daniel Steiner ordained May 29, 1814.

Petter Steiner ordained May 29, 1814.

No mention is made in the list whether the ordination was for the office of deacon or minister.

Schumacher was of Swiss origin but lived in the Breisgau for some years previous to settling near Montbéliard in 1739.¹⁰⁰ Shortly before the turn of the century all the living members of the family settled in the Normanvillars settlement. A single man named Johannes Zürcher from Rüderswil worked as a day laborer here.¹⁰¹

Most of the Anabaptists in the Normanvillars settlement rented farms which they cultivated. They carried with them the art of cheese making via the Jura from the Emmental. Another group plied the trade of linen weaving.¹⁰² Some of the farmers wove as a means of supplementing their income in the winter. The linen goods they produced were of good quality and came to be known at the market at Belfort as "Anabaptist linen" (*Toile Anabaptiste*). Other trades carried on by Anabaptists here were milling and tile making.¹⁰³

Conclusion

By the end of the eighteenth century Bernese Anabaptism had been scattered quite far. Most of their emigration had taken place during this century. Settlements were made in Holland, additions were made to the Palatinate churches and also those in Alsace. Besides this a new movement started for America in the early part of the century which lasted until nearly the middle. Because of expulsion in Alsace new settlements were made in the Principality of Montbéliard. Large settlements were made in the high mountain plateaus of the Jura Mountains in the Bishopric of Basel. The original home of many of these migrants and expellees was the Emmental. But few were left in the old home. In fact there were not enough to have regular meetings and a minister of their own during the middle decades of the eighteenth century. In the Palatinate, Holland, and America the Bernese culture was soon mixed with other cultures and lost much of its former character. Only in the Jura and Normanvillars areas did they retain the language and culture of their homeland. Here too the spiritual life of the Anabaptists reached heights closely paralleling their life in the

¹⁰⁰ Mathiot, *op. cit.*, 77.

¹⁰¹ *État Civil, Commune de Florimont*.

¹⁰² Mathiot, *op. cit.*, 90.

¹⁰³ Pierre Sommer, "The present situation of the French-speaking Mennonites," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* II, 4 (Oct. 1928), 273.

early decades of the Reformation. This came after they found a degree of freedom but still remembered vividly the persecution that had gone before, still realizing that their position was very precarious. The century ended with a note of hope and fear combined in a new manner. The old intolerant governments that had long persecuted the Anabaptists were overthrown. But they were wary of revolutions bringing better conditions. Nor did they believe that cries of liberty and equality would bring about such conditions. According to their tenets they remained aloof from the political upheavals of the day and tried to adjust to changed conditions as their beliefs would permit. During the following century they found conditions little better. This caused more to leave for America.

V

Bernese Anabaptism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

Introduction

The past 150 years have brought great changes in nearly every aspect of the life for the Bernese Anabaptists who remained on Swiss soil. Much of this was due to the growing toleration of the latter part of the eighteenth century which found its culmination in the Helvetic Constitution of 1798, and in the various laws exempting Anabaptists from military duty that followed.

The French invasion and occupation brought numerous changes in the external as well as the internal boundaries of Switzerland. The most important of these for the Bernese Anabaptists was that the Bishopric of Basel was united to canton Bern in compensation for a portion taken away from the eastern part of the canton to help form canton Aargau and in the south to form canton Vaud in 1815. So it was again with Bernese authorities, although quite a different regime than in the past, with whom the Anabaptists had to reckon.

The "hunger years" of 1816 and 1817 together with unsettled conditions of the time encouraged the Anabaptists to look to the solution of emigration. Only a few left during the "hunger years" but those who did leave wrote such glowing accounts that within the next two decades enough had left to form three large Bernese Anabaptist settlements in Ohio. The 1850's brought another wave of emigration, which left fewer Anabaptists on Bernese soil than in America. The settlement at Normanvillars became nearly extinct and the churches in the Jura were left numerically and spiritually weakened.

Although relatively few from the Emmental Anabaptist congregation emigrated this church divided on theological grounds into what came to be known as the *Alttäufer* and the *Neutäufer*, the *Alttäufer* retaining fellowship with the Jura churches.

Mixed marriages, great distances to attend meetings, and the

ambitious proselytizing endeavors of the *Evangelische Brüderverein* have made the number of Bernese Anabaptists decrease rather than increase during the past century and a half.

Though many church principles and customs were lost, most of those who remained in the Jura held tenaciously to their Emmental language and culture. In a number of the Anabaptist communities in the Jura, buildings were erected during the latter part of the nineteenth century which are used for church services as well as for school. Because these schools are conducted in German they have gained much attention during the past thirty years through elements in the French-speaking district of Switzerland desiring to eliminate all Swiss-German culture in this area.

The Anabaptists of the Jura have become the leaders in agriculture in their area developing horse, cattle, and sheep breeding to a high degree.

A recent development has been the joining of the Emmental Anabaptist congregation with the Reformed state church. This has created a dual relationship for this church. They remain as an Anabaptist church within the state-church organization. This has caused some consternation among the Jura churches as they oppose this move quite strongly.

The Bernese Anabaptists remain in the same general regions in which they were found during the eighteenth century, *viz.*, the Emmental and the Jura. In the Jura some settlements have disappeared while others have taken on greater importance.

Growing Toleration

The state-church government of Bern grew more tolerant of non-Reformed church groups during the eighteenth century. But complete religious freedom was still unthinkable in their minds. This idea, ironically enough, was destined to come from a non-Christian, nonreligious movement, the French Revolution.

By 1792 France had captured the portion of the Bishopric of Basel that was under the German Empire. This included the districts of Porrentruy, Laufen, Franches-Montagnes, and Delémont. This area was made into a *department* (state) of France named Mont Terrible. By 1797 the remainder of the Bishopric of Basel was taken by France and added to the French *department* of Haut

Rhin along with Department du Mont Terrible. The state of Bern was also defeated and together with the rest of the conquered Swiss Confederacy was made into the Helvetian Republic.

The French Revolution destroyed all in its path, both good and evil. Institutions and governments that had withstood the storms of centuries were smashed with one blow. Churches suffered along with other institutions. Catholic monasteries were expropriated in the Catholic Jura. The ideas of the battle cry "Liberty, equality, and fraternity" were set forth in the first Helvetian Constitution of April 12, 1798. The sixth article gave the Anabaptists reason to hope for a future of complete tolerance: It reads:

The freedom of conscience is unrestricted. However, the public manifestation of religious beliefs must not disturb concord and peace. Any kind of worship is allowed if it does not disturb public order and does not claim preponderance or preference. All types of church meetings are subject to inspection by the police. They can demand that the teachings and duties of the church be made known to them. The relations a denomination may have to a foreign power must not be of any influence on state affairs or upon the welfare and enlightenment of the people.¹

To assure obedience to the new Helvetic Constitution each citizen was required to appear at the Reformed church in his *Heimat* on a set day in 1798 and swear allegiance to the new constitution and government. The Anabaptists were usually recorded after affirming with the note behind their name "*Täufer*."² One man living in the commune of Worb, seeming to be the only Anabaptist in this commune, gave a clear statement of his position. It was recorded by his name on the list of Worb citizens taking the oath and reads as follows:

I say "yes" that I will serve the fatherland and the matter of "freedom and equality" as long as it is not contrary to the teachings of Christ and His apostles. [I will do this] with all fervor and with a rightful hate against anarchy and licentiousness. Instead of saying "I swear" I say "yes." "Yes" and "no" in my religion are considered sacred.

I, Hans Tanner from Ried, living at Worb.³

¹ Johannes Strickler (ed.), *Actensammlung aus der Zeit der Helvetischen Republik* (Bern, 1886), I, 568. Article 6.

² *Bürger Rodel der Kirchgemeinde Langnau und Schangnau Aufgenommen den 17 August 1798*. Also *Bürger Register für das Kirchspiel der Gemeinde Eggwil*. Anno 1798. SAB. XIII, 437.

³ *Bürger Register der Kirchgemeinde Worb. August 17-September 4, 1798*. SAB. B XIII, 437.

On the basis of the sixth article in the Helvetic Constitution (quoted above) a law was passed on February 12, 1799, which came to be called the Act of Religious Toleration (*Duldungsgesetz aller Religionsmeinungen*). This act declared all former laws and mandates limiting the freedom of worship to be resolved. This one act elevated the Anabaptist church from the status of illegality to equal rights with the powerful Reformed church.⁴

This monumental piece of legislation for religious toleration was too great a step taken too rapidly for the Bernese to follow. It was incomprehensible to the Reformed church officials that the Anabaptists should be on equal footing with them. The church officials sought a way to evade this new law, especially after 1803 at which time the so-called "period of mediation" began. Acts implementing this law of toleration were not passed. Church and state were still as one in many functions. Births could not be recorded without the act of baptism first being administered by the Reformed church clergy. Citizens' rights only went to those having proof of state-church baptism. Marriages were legal only when performed by state-church ministers. Children of couples not married by Reformed ministers were declared illegitimate and thus unable to inherit property. Most local church governments did not press these technicalities. Langnau and several neighboring state churches, however, did endeavor to make life miserable for the Anabaptists. Already in 1803 the district of Signau reported that there were fourteen unbaptized children of Anabaptists in its area and sought advice on how to deal with them.⁵

Because restrictions on the Anabaptists again seemed to be ever increasing four of their leaders from the Emmental, Niklaus Gerber, Christian Gerber, Ulrich Kipfer, and Christian Brand, made an appeal to the government in March, 1810. They requested the observance of their rights by the "Act of Religious Toleration" of 1799 guaranteed them.⁶ The answer came that this law did not apply to the Anabaptists nor any denomination that would evade the laws and regulations of the country. This decision was based on evidence given by the Langnau church council to the state council, in

⁴ *Tageblatt der Gesetze und Dekrete . . . der helvetischen Republik*, II, 311-12.

⁵ *Manual des Staatsrats*, V, 62-63 (Oct. 21, 1805).

⁶ *Akten betreffend Wiedertäufer*. Letter of March, 1810. SAB. B III, 386.

which they listed some of the principles of the Anabaptists and then concluded that the security of the state would be jeopardized if they permitted this group to practice these beliefs. They also remarked that the Anabaptists traced their origin from the Apostolic church but that in actuality they had originated under the leadership of the fanatic, Thomas Müntzer, but moderated under the influence of Menno Simons. Even though they were no longer fanatical but rather good, honest, and pious people their principles were for the church and government as dangerous as before, they reported.⁷

The Langnau parish ordered a compulsory baptism of all children of Anabaptists that had remained unbaptized since the French Revolution. On March 15, 1811, some twenty-seven were brought to the church by local police and baptized by the minister, Stephani. The church council took the place of godfathers. The parents of the children silently protested by sending them in dirty and torn clothes.⁸

The energetic Langnau Reformed minister met some obstinate Anabaptists in his endeavors to have their children baptized. In a letter of January 22, 1812, to the President of government (*Schultheiss*) he relates some of his trials. Most difficult for him were his dealings with the four older children (ages 17 to 23) of the Anabaptist minister, Michael Gerber. When he visited them and asked if they did not want to be baptized and receive communion, they answered that they had received religious instruction and had been baptized and that they did not need *Ihre Sache* (your stuff). This infuriated the Reformed minister so much that he filled the next several pages setting his wrath down on paper. Another case he mentions that added more to his troubles was the case of Anna Blaser who had been baptized by the state minister but more recently rebaptized by an Anabaptist minister.⁹

In 1815 the Anabaptists in the Jura again found themselves under Bernese rule. The territory of the former Bishopric of Basel together with the district of Biel were added to the canton of Bern at the same time that a district on the eastern side of canton Bern was taken away to help form the canton of Aargau. The agreement

⁷ *Manual des Kirchenrats*, IV, 543 (April 4, 1812). SAB. B III, 296. Hereafter referred to as MKR. See also RM 24, 203 (Feb. 2, 1812), and RM 18, 339 (Feb. 26, 1810).

⁸ MKR, IV, 264-65 (March 30, 1811). SAB. B III, 296.

⁹ *Akten betr. Wiedertäufer*. Letter of Jan. 22, 1812. B III, 386.

made at the time of annexation is called the *Vereinigungsurkunde* (Document of Union).¹⁰

The thirteenth article of the Document of Union assured the Jura Anabaptists of their former rights.¹¹ A request was made by the Emmental Anabaptists through the district mayor of Signau to be permitted the same privileges as their Jura brethren. The council planned to issue a special Anabaptist ordinance but refrained to do so because they felt this would attribute too much importance to the Anabaptists. Instead, an opinion was given by the church council on August 3, 1816, requiring the Anabaptists to wear special clothing. It was also suggested that the Reformed ministers should be permitted to attend any Anabaptist service and copies of all of their books of religious instruction should be deposited with the district officials.¹² These suggestions were never incorporated into a decree.

The council issued a general executive order (*Kreisschreiben*) after many temporary regulations proved unsatisfactory. This was dated November 22, 1820, and included the following:

On the report of the details concerning the Anabaptists our church council offers the following rules concerning their civil duties as an expansion of paragraph 13 of the Document of Union.

1. Each certificate of an Anabaptist minister is invalid unless it is legalized by the head official (*Oberamtman*) of the district in which he lives.

2. It is the duty of each Anabaptist to notify the Reformed minister of the parish in which he lives concerning the birth of a child. This must be done within three weeks after the date of birth. If this is not done a fine of 20 francs (\$30) will be made. The Reformed minister will report this to the minister of the home parish of the father so that the child will be recorded properly.

3. The ministers of the Anabaptists are required to present a legalized certificate of admission to holy communion of persons baptized by them within three weeks after this act has taken place. If this is not done a fine of from 20 to 50 francs (\$30 to \$75) will be made.

4. From now on no Anabaptist marriage will be considered valid that is not announced on three consecutive Sundays from the Reformed church pulpit of the parishes of the bride and bridegroom. After this a certificate will be given by the minister to be kept by the Anabaptist minister who marries them. The Anabaptist minister will give them a marriage certificate which must be legalized as paragraph one specifies. This must be counter-

¹⁰ *Neue Sammlungen der Gesetze und Dekrete . . . der Stadt und Republik Bern*, I, 18-32.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 24. Article 13.

¹² MKR, VII, 154-60. Aug. 3, 1816. SAB. B III, 299.

signed by the minister of the parish in which the couple lives and sent to the commune where the bridegroom holds his citizenship. This must be done within fourteen days.

For the pains, paper, postage, and prepayment the minister will charge 3 francs (\$4.50).

All those (Anabaptists) dealt with a second time concerning this fourth article will be fined from 50 to 100 francs (\$75 to \$150).

5. The Anabaptists are obligated to obey the laws and are under the same penalties as the other citizens.

The oath of allegiance of the Anabaptist young people shall be made to the *Oberamtmann* (highest official) of the district in which they live. Their affirmation will be considered on the same basis as swearing.

6. Any fines collected from the Anabaptists when they break the above rules will be turned over to the poor of the commune in which the Anabaptist lives.

These present rules must be carried out by the church officials of the districts in which Anabaptists are located. No open mandate is to be published but rather this should be copied in the mandate book and followed carefully.¹³

Soon after the proclamation appeared it became evident that the Reformed ministry in the Jura was no more anxious to announce Anabaptists' marriages than mixed marriages. This led to the erection of the *Civilstandsamt* (office to register births, marriages, and deaths) in the Jura which took over these unpleasant duties of the ministry.¹⁴

The Reformed ministry claimed that the 1820 proclamation gave entirely too much freedom and recognition to the Anabaptists. They claimed that this gave them full recognition as a church. Another complaint came that numerous families that had formerly not belonged to the Anabaptists now joined.¹⁵

These complaints gave rise to five additional rules which were issued July 4, 1823. These were designed to control the Anabaptists more closely. The proclamation reads as follows:

1. Within three months a complete register including name, place of citizenship and dwelling place of all Anabaptists in each district must be made and a copy filed with the small council. Changes in this list are to be reported each year after Easter to the church council through the district governor.

2. As the 13th article of the Document of Union of the *Leberbergian* (Jura) districts only refers to the Anabaptists and their descendants who

¹³ MKR, XII, 367-70. SAB. B III, 304.

¹⁴ MKR, XII, 349-50. SAB. B III, 304.

¹⁵ MKR, XIV, 489-93. SAB. B III, 306.

then were living there, so the regulation stated by the district proclamation of November 22, 1820, is applicable only to the families or persons now belonging to or confessing to the Anabaptist doctrine.

3. The Anabaptists are to announce the time and place of their meetings to the district official and at the same time submit themselves to all police regulations. In case of disobedience the hosts and the persons attending the meeting will be liable to punishment.

4. The Anabaptists are to refrain completely from making proselytes. If in the future a person not of Anabaptist background wants to join this sect, the Anabaptist minister must immediately announce it to the district official who can then ask the person questions about the particulars and remind him of the consequences of this step. They shall then direct him to the state church minister of the parish who may also examine the person and refute his reasons for changing denominations. The minister should dissuade him from joining the sect. This should be done in an amicable manner and make it his personal conviction.

5. Proselytes who join the Anabaptists will remain liable to all general duties without exception. This refers especially to military service, the obligation to act as a witness, and the duty to take a guardianship. If they should try to evade one or the other of these obligations the resisting person will be liable to punishment without regard for his Anabaptist beliefs. This does not apply to the children of Anabaptists.¹⁶

The issuance of these regulations gave a formal acknowledgment of the Anabaptists as a religious body. Although it regulated them in a systematic way it gave more freedom and recognition than they had thus far known. They were all but forbidden to proselytize. This fact, however, was not of great consequence to the Anabaptists. They had been controlled so closely during the past three centuries that by this time they had little ambition to proselytize. The Anabaptist church in the Jura had become almost a clan as well as a religious body. Practically each member was related by blood to every other member. Never had the Anabaptists done much proselyting in the ordinary sense of the word. During certain periods, it is true, numerous persons had joined their ranks for which they were glad. Their method of gaining members from outside their own ranks was due to persons observing their personal lives and testimonies. This never won great numbers. Other persons from the German-speaking sections of Switzerland went to the Jura at about the same time as the Anabaptists. Most of the additions to the Anabaptists of the Jura came from this element who found it to be the only German-speaking church in their community. Only two proselytes were made in the Jura in the seven years fol-

¹⁶ MKR, XV, 483-86. SAB. B III, 307.

lowing the issuance of the above-given order. During the same period, however, some forty-three persons not of Anabaptist stock in the Emmental joined their numbers.¹⁷

The list of Anabaptists requested in the first article was completed without delay. Probably this was to show their intention to abide by the liberties granted them. Lists were made by the Anabaptist ministers as precisely as they could. These appear to have been written in the crude spelling and handwriting of a farmer-minister rather than the neat script of a paid scribe. The lists were given to the district authorities who sometimes edited them and forwarded the information if not the list itself to the council in Bern.¹⁸ Here the lists were all copied into a book which was given the name *Controlle der Wiedertäufer*.¹⁹ This was kept up for nine years. In the district of Moutier a similar list was continued until 1841 and in the Signau district (Emmental) until 1850.²⁰ Although some mistakes crept into these lists by the time they were finally copied into the master list, it remains a monument of information concerning the Bernese Anabaptists of the early nineteenth century. One can gather from it a precise picture of their geographic locations, occupations, names, and dates of those who went to America, statistics as well as a wealth of data for the person interested in the genealogy of any of the families who were Anabaptists at the time.^{20a}

Having attained formal recognition from the government the remainder of the story of the growing toleration of the government toward the Anabaptists is concerned with how this law and those that followed were executed. The greater portion of this concerns the point in their beliefs that was bound to cause conflict until definitely clarified by the state, *viz.*, nonresistance.

The restoration government in 1815 ruled that the Anabaptists need not do military service but instead must send a person as substitute or pay a special military tax. The Reformed minister in

¹⁷ *Controlle der Wiedertäufer* I, II. B III, 388 and 389. Information gained from the statistical summaries given at the end of each volume.

¹⁸ *Wiedertäufer Berichte*. SAB. B III, 385.

¹⁹ *Controlle der Wiedertäufer* I, II. SAB. B III, 388-89.

²⁰ *Verzeichnis von Wiedertäufern in Amtsbezirk Münster*, 1823-41. SAB. B III, 391
Namensverzeichnis der Wiedertäufer in Oberamt Signau. SAB. B III, 392.

^{20a} A copy of these lists is in the possession of the author.

Langnau, Stephani, reported a few years later that "no Anabaptists do army duty. Rather, they buy themselves free by paying a special state tax. This is not permitted other citizens. Thus, one sees strong and healthy young men of families with some means who are protected from military service."²¹

A discussion of military training as relating to the Anabaptists was held by the great council of Bern in November, 1835.²² The fear of some of the council was that others besides the Anabaptists would claim freedom from military service. After several very favorable testimonies for the Anabaptists' position they voted to retain this privilege for the Anabaptists. In the law of military organization of December 14, 1835, the following article was included:

Anabaptists who have lived in the canton (Bern) since July 4, 1823, and their descendants who will not do military service are to be freed from this duty. However, instead of doing military service they are to pay a special tax yearly into the state treasury.²³

In the law on military organization of April 16, 1847, a similar exception was made for the Anabaptists.²⁴

The Swiss *Bundesversammlung* made a law on June 19, 1850, whereby the army was to be chosen and regulated through the federal government instead of the cantonal governments as done previously. It also stated the categories of persons that would be freed from military service.²⁵ The Anabaptists did not find themselves on this exempt list. This stirred them into action. After some discussion the churches in the Jura chose five of their ministers and deacons to represent them in this matter. They prepared a document requesting similar exemption from military service to that granted before. This was signed by 126 concerned members and dated September 1, 1850.²⁶ A similar protest was made by the Emmental Anabaptists and dated October 30 of the same year. This was only signed by the Anabaptist church officials.²⁷ Ulrich Ochsenbein, legal adviser at Nidau, petitioned the Bernese government in the name of

²¹ S. Geiser, *Die Taufgesinnten Gemeinden* (Karlsruhe, 1931), 471.

²² Details of this discussion are given in Geiser, *op. cit.*, 471-73.

²³ *Gesetze, Dekrete und Verordnungen der Republik Bern*, V (1835), 229.

²⁴ *Gesetze, Dekrete und Verordnungen des Cantons Bern* Band II (1847), 83.

²⁵ *Bundesgesetz über die Enthebung der Wehrpflicht*, July 19, 1850.

²⁶ *Akten betreffend Militärdienst der Wiedertäufer*, 1850, Sept. 1, 1850. SAB. B III, 393.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Oct. 30, 1850.

the Anabaptists to exempt them from military service. He not only based his appeal on the thirteenth article of the Document of Union but also in the name of humanity and Christian tolerance.²⁸ The government directed this matter to the cantonal military section. No action was taken. The Anabaptists continued as before, not being compelled to do military service.²⁹

In the new federal constitution of 1874 a clause stated that each Swiss citizen, without exception, is liable to military service.³⁰ The Anabaptists tried in many ways, honorable and otherwise, to circumvent this new order. Many stories are told how the young men sought to evade military training. One cut off his trigger finger. Another sent a cripple in his place who was naturally discharged. This was later discovered and punishment meted out to the evader.³¹ It was more common for the young men to go to Alsace until no longer liable for military service. Many stayed there and their descendants have inherited Swiss citizenship; thus they are not liable to either Swiss or French military duty. Several families emigrated to America at this time. Regardless of all attempts of evasion the first Bernese Anabaptists found themselves in military uniform within the next years. The only consideration given them was that they were permitted to do their service in a noncombatant division as the hospital corps.³² Within recent times a law has been passed that "persons who are led by religious convictions not to do their military service in an armed division of the army are to be assigned to the hospital corps."³³

The official position of the Anabaptist church came to be that of accepting service in the hospital corps. Not all, however, have taken advantage of this provision within recent years. Because of their love for horses several have chosen the cavalry. Although all military service other than hospital service is frowned upon by the majority of the ministry no censure or church discipline is used on the young men who do not choose this service.³⁴

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Geiser, *op. cit.*, 474.

³⁰ C. Hilty, *Die Bundesverfassung der Schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft* (Bern, 1891), 442. Article 18. "Jeder Schweizer ist wehrpflichtig."

³¹ From interviews with Jura Anabaptists.

³² Geiser, *op. cit.*, 474.

³³ *Militär-amtsblatt*, 1921, p. 8. Point 4 of the *Verfügung des eidgenössischen Militärdepartements vom 21 January 1921 betreffend Rekrutierung*.

³⁴ Interview with Jura Anabaptists.

Immediately following the first World War a movement arose in Switzerland among an intellectual humanitarian group to persuade the government to permit men conscientiously opposed to participation in war to do alternate service for the government. After much agitation and numerous debates in the federal parliament this proposal was voted down.³⁵ Interest in this idea also waned until after World War II when the same idea was again brought up for debate before the parliament and refused. In the latter movement there appears to be a more definitely religious tinge.³⁶ The Anabaptists have never taken part in these actions. Primarily, the reason has been because of the lack of religious emphasis. The Anabaptists are for the most part quite satisfied with the status quo.

With a growing toleration of the government toward the Anabaptists came a similar spirit on the part of the Anabaptists toward the government. The principle of the Anabaptists not to take part in civil government remained for them unchanged until the latter part of the nineteenth century when they first voted in public elections. Within the past two decades several Jura Anabaptists have held local governmental positions. A number serve on their local communal council. Two Anabaptists have run for seats in the Bernese parliament during the past two decades. Johannes Gerber of Vion near Tavannes was successful in being elected in the 1930's.³⁷

Economic Conditions

Economically conditions remained quite static for the Anabaptists in the Jura and Florimont regions from the latter half of the eighteenth century through the beginning of the nineteenth century. Rents remained high. The numbers of Anabaptists increased, making conditions ever more crowded. It was an extremely laborious type of living with little hope for a change for the better.

The military occupation by the French added neither morally nor economically to the Anabaptists. The French expropriated church lands as well as the lands of certain of the royalty. It does not seem that the Anabaptists bought any of these lands. It was

³⁵ Information from newspaper clippings in the possession of A. J. Amstutz-Tschirren, Wabern bei Bern.

³⁶ *Der Säemann. Monatsblatt der bernischen Landeskirche*. 65. Jahrgang, Nr. 7, 9, 10.

³⁷ Information from Christian Lerch, *Archivist at the Berner Staatsarchiv*.

rather the already wealthy landowners who had money with which to buy further possessions. In fact, ownership of land was not known among the Jura Anabaptists until the latter part of the nineteenth century and is not common among them even today.³⁸

The economic difficulties of the Jura Anabaptists in the first decades of the nineteenth century have been described by the son of one of the early emigrants to Ohio. Excerpts from this account are given below:

The occupation of our fathers in Switzerland was principally that of farming and cattle raising. However, nearly everyone had a trade besides in order to earn something during the long winter. A deep snow falls upon the mountains deep enough to cover the fences, and at that time there is no work in the fields nor in the forest. Among them were joiners, turners, and shoemakers who made both wooden and leather shoes. But in our fathers' time the principal occupation in winter was weaving. The flax grew well so the women were able to spin a long yarn. In the narrow mountain valleys the winter evenings were long as the sun shone only a few hours during the shortest days, and in some places it did not shine at all for 16 to 18 weeks. The spinning wheels hummed by the light of the pine branches and the weaver's shuttle rushed back and forth until late at night. Because there is so much snow which drifts high, the house and barn are under one roof. There are some wooden buildings chinked with a mixture of clay and straw which is placed about the pieces of wood and between the logs. Many of the homes were constructed of limestone and plastered on the outside as well as the inside. The shingles were cut by means of a broadax and were kept in place with stones so that they would not be blown off by the wind.

Even though raising cattle is a part of their industry, most of them were not able to raise many. They each raised a cow and a few goats or a goat and several cows according to their means. The rich people kept a horse to help haul in hay. The cow was often hitched beside the horse to plow. Two men were always necessary, one to plow and the other to drive. From four to six persons followed the plow to hoe the furrow. Their plows looked like old prairie plows of our own country. They had two wheels under the beam to regulate the depth of plowing. One drove continuously back and forth along the side of the hill and all the furrows were made toward the bottom of the hill and then the ground from the last furrow was transported to the top of the hill in order to fill the last furrow.

Very little wheat was sown as it did not ripen in the high altitudes. A type of spelt was raised but generally oats, barley, and peas. These three, mixed, ground, and baked, composed the bread that the mountaineers ate. It was black and heavy yet it contained more food value than bread made from the finest white flour. Their principal product was the potato which found its way from America to the remotest mountain districts of Europe.

All work of the field like haying and harvesting was done with simple tools as the scythe, hand rake, and sickle. Threshing was done with flails.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Both men and women worked during the busy season from four in the morning until ten at night.

Their food was simple and had little variety. It consisted generally of black bread, potatoes, milk, vegetables, and some meat. The latter was seldom served, perhaps on Sunday or holidays, for there was generally only one or two hogs killed for a family. Meat was therefore considered a rare dainty by many and when it was placed on the table the father cut it into pieces so that everyone received his right portion.

There was little luxury in setting the table. The potatoes boiled with the jackets were poured out on the table. A bowl of milk or soup was given to each. Everyone carried a long pocket knife which was used in cutting bread if the father had not already cut it into the proper size.

Butter and molasses did not burden the table of our parents, and they did not spoil their stomachs with all kinds of unnecessary tidbits. The good things like butter had to be taken into the village in order to purchase necessary articles from the proceeds and also to pay the annual tax. Generally, a man was considered fortunate who could support his family in an ordinary manner and pay his rent. There were some who could make their livelihood very well and could lay aside a small capital for old age. But there were also many who had to rely on the church for support.

On account of these difficulties they became accustomed to laboring hard and learned to become very thrifty. Profuse idleness was not customary among them. But they also had their joys and pleasures. There were always many working together, both men and women, for it was not below the dignity of women to help with the work in the fields. Even if some of their principal work had to be postponed they celebrated their holidays in great gaiety. After harvesting they celebrated the *Sichelten* (feast of sickles); after threshing, *Flegelten*, the flailing, etc. Then they made cakes or went into the valley to get white bread and a measure of wine according to the money the farmer had. In the fall were the flax-brake. Girls and boys helped here. . . . In nearly every town or village a fair was held in the fall. The young people planned for this for a long time, for they had to buy something for their money that they had saved. The older people took a cow, a horse, a sheep, or a pig or something of their handwork to the fair in order to find someone to purchase it.³⁹

The worst famine in the history of Switzerland took place from the harvest of 1816 until the harvest of 1817. In 1816 it snowed and froze during every month of the year. This famine climaxed the hardships that had already been present. Blight ruined the potato crop. Rents were raised and all living expenses increased. Food was very scarce especially for the poor who had no store of provisions. Loaves of bread were made smaller. Herbs and roots were gathered and made into soup. Sickness added to the sufferings of the Anabaptists.⁴⁰

³⁹ Abraham J. Moser, "Aus dem Leben der Schweizer-Mennoniten," *Christlicher Bundesbote*, Aug. 15, 1885.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

David Kirchhofer, who left the Jura with other Anabaptists in 1819, composed a poem of seven stanzas depicting the difficult life of the Jura Anabaptists. The first three stanzas give a picture of conditions as he knew them:

Was soll ich fangen an
Das ich mit Ehren kann
Mein Haus ernähren
Samt meinem Weib und Kind
Die mir gegeben sind
Von Gott dem Herr

Es ist ja überall
Auf Berg und tiefem Thal
Ist alles bewohnt
Das gar viel arme Leut
Zu keinen Zeiten nichts
Können bekommen

Wo in dem Schweitzerland
Wie manchem ist bekannt
Hort man viel Klagen
Weil es so volkreich ist
Und so viel schlechte Jahr
Nicht zu ertragen.⁴¹

Under these trying economic conditions it was only natural for these people to look to other lands where greater opportunity existed. This they had done before in the past half century but wars and unsettled conditions at home and abroad prohibited any great number from leaving. The first families left for America in 1817. Upon receipt of their reports others left so that within five years the emigration had grown to sizable proportions. The height of this emigration took place in 1833 although the mid 1850's saw the greatest numbers leaving in a planned fashion. During this period of forty years more Anabaptists left for America than stayed behind. Economically this meant much to those who remained. This gave more farm land for the Jura Anabaptists to make a living. Never again were they to be so overcrowded and hard pressed for existence.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the factory system of weaving linen was established in canton Bern. By the latter part of the century it was no longer profitable to raise flax and work it into

⁴¹ Sem Geiger, "David Kirchhofer" (MS), 2. Kirchhofer had little formal schooling, hence some of his questionable grammar.

cloth in the home.⁴² The Anabaptists then had to seek out other types of work in which they could excel which were within the bounds of their possibilities. Cheese making remained as one of the chief forms of cash income. Emmentaler, Greyerzer, and Tilsiter are the more common types of cheese made by them. At the Moron Anabaptist community a cheese is made that is considered a great delicacy and so brings higher prices than other. It is called *Tête de Moine* (monk's head) because it was first made by the Bellelay Monastery near by and has somewhat the shape of a human head. The texture and flavor resembles American cream cheese. At this same community a rare brandy is made from the root of the gentian plant. This, too, brings a good price in the cities.⁴³

The greatest contribution that the Jura Anabaptists have made to the Swiss economy is in their pioneering in horse breeding. A casual glance through the list of winners at horse fairs in the region reveals the typical family names of Anabaptists.⁴⁴ Cattle and sheep raising have also been strong points in their agricultural art. The Gerber family of Les Joux near Tramelan has been especially active in developing a special breed of dark sheep which have come to be called Jura Sheep. The large rocky meadows afford an abundance of pasture for grazing.⁴⁵

The depression period of the 1930's proved to be difficult times for the Jura Anabaptists. Many had purchased land at high prices, some built expensive buildings, others abandoned their age-old principle of simplicity. All these factors added to their depression difficulties.⁴⁶ The second World War brought with it further prosperity which has wiped out the effects of the depression.

Regardless of all their ingenuity and resourcefulness the life of the Jura Anabaptist farmer remains a difficult one. Much work must be done by hand because of the many stones in the fields and also the limited size of the fields that are cultivatable. Only a very few have automobiles. Their means of conveyance is a light horse-

⁴² Ernst H. Correll, *Das schweizerische Täufermennonitentum* (Tübingen, 1925), 102.

⁴³ Interview with Jacob Lerch family at Moron, March, 1949.

⁴⁴ Information from clippings from Jura newspapers collected by A. J. Amstutz, Wabern bei Bern.

⁴⁵ Interview with Jura Anabaptists.

⁴⁶ Samuel Geiser, "The Mennonites of Switzerland and France," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XI (Jan. 1937), p. 54.

drawn four-wheeled wagon. Never has great wealth come into the path of the Jura Anabaptists but through constant toil the most of them have found a certain prosperity to take care of their needs.

The Church

CHURCH LIFE

The famous Swiss writer, Heinrich Zschokke, traveled through the Jura Mountains during the fore part of the nineteenth century and gave a description of the area and its inhabitants. Though a man who held very unorthodox religious views himself, he was deeply touched by the manner in which Christianity was taught and lived by the Anabaptists. He has written of them as follows:

It was as if I were living in the first times of early Christianity, they [Anabaptists] were so content, so pious and without hypocrisy. They live here so hospitable and industrious in patriarchal simplicity and pious customs. Among them are no drunkards, gamblers, no night revelers, no liars, no jealous neighbors. If a quarrel or dispute arises among them, which is very seldom, it is adjusted in a friendly manner by one of their elders. One helps the other at hay and corn harvest and whenever necessary without pay. Their temperance and customary cleanliness preserves their good health to a ripe old age. An old man of more than 70 years who was one of their teachers (they do not have preachers) led me vigorously over mountains and valleys like a youth, to his church brothers' homes. What genuine love of married people, what tenderness among the brothers, sisters, what heedfulness of children toward their parents did I witness here! Practically their entire system of education rests simply upon the examples of the adults for the children and in a few words, "Have God before your eyes." And still they enjoy a rearing which is often nobler than the best given in the large world. What a people, what a Christianity that needs no lawyers, no preacher, no judge and seldom a doctor!

On Sunday they come to this or that teacher (*Lehrer*) to be instructed in the open or in the barn or in a large room in a home. The teacher speaks as it lies nearest to his heart on what the people need or reads out of an old book of edification. He baptizes, gives communion, marries, but is a farmer like the others. Baptism precedes first communion and often the marriage of an engaged couple. Their devotional, prayer, and song books including their martyr songs smack of ancient times. When the services are finished those families living at a distance are served meals as these had been at their home at some former time.

Their implements and clothing are clean and unadorned like their modest homes. Like all other church groups of the Christian world, the Anabaptists have their fancies and peculiarities. That married men let

their beards grow as a mark of distinctive manhood would not be so bad if only their dress were of the middle ages or Old Testament fashion. But the short gray coat, short trousers and stockings drawn up over the kness do not harmonize majestically with the beard. Buttons on their clothes are also forbidden. They are replaced with hooks and eyes and lacing. The women appear just as plain. No gold, no velvet nor silk, not even a bright or many-colored silk ribbon dare flutter from their straw hat. But in spite of all this the girls know how to find a means to adorn themselves without bringing their religion into danger.⁴⁷

DIVISION IN THE EMMENTAL

The remnants of the Amish division in Switzerland were weak by the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁴⁸ But the same church of Anabaptists in the Emmental that so thoroughly resisted this division fell prey to one that decimated its ranks in the decade of the 1830's.

Originator of this division was Samuel Fröhlich from Brugg. Fröhlich studied theology at Zurich but was dismissed from the ministry of the state church in Aargau because of his opposition to certain practices as infant baptism. He then sought an ear among various sects then in existence. In 1832 Fröhlich came to Langnau where he found good soil for his ideas in two disgruntled ministers of the Anabaptist church there, Christen Baumgartner and Christen Gerber. Gerber, especially, had found much fault with the church life of the Anabaptists. He had complained much against the indifference and slothfulness of the ministry. Fröhlich was permitted in the pulpit. He also held numerous evening meetings. He held little respect for some of the old Anabaptist customs but brought new spirit and life that appealed to many. After a time he was compelled by local authorities to leave the district. Christen Gerber accompanied him to Burgdorf. But Fröhlich's spirit worked on especially through Gerber. Close contact was kept between the group that Fröhlich had founded in Aargau and several of the Anabaptist ministers at Langnau.

Slowly two distinct groups formed within the Langnau Anabaptist church. Differences grew greater. Toward Christmas 1834 Christen Baumgartner and Christen Gerber started holding com-

⁴⁷ Heinrich Zschokke, *Novellen und Dichtungen* (Philadelphia, 1854), III. *Schweizer Skizzen*. Nr. 19. *Die Wiedertäufer*.

⁴⁸ *Akten betreffend die Wiedertäufer, 1811-1816*. Letter of July 6, 1820. SAB. B III, 386.

munion secretly with their group. News of the trouble within the church reached the Jura ministry. Four brethren, David Baumgartner, Hans Zingg, Jakob Nussbaumer, and Ulrich Lehmann, went to Langnau in January, 1835, to try to settle the dispute but accomplished little. Until that time the Langnau ministry had held together in the hopes of finding a solution. But now they started holding meetings separately.

At the same time came George Steiger from the Toggenburg to make the break much greater. Steiger was a young man of twenty-one whom Fröhlich had sent to the Emmental. It is said that he had studied to be a Roman Catholic priest. He declared that they were all spiritually dead as long as they had not been baptized by immersion. The ministers Christen Baumgartner and Christen Gerber as also a number of members were baptized at this time by Steiger.⁴⁹

Sixty-three Anabaptists and about the same number from the Reformed church joined this new Anabaptist church which came to be known locally as *Neutäufer*.⁵⁰ By others it was called after its founder *Fröhlichianer*. Officially they have taken the name *Gemeinschaft Evangelisch Taufgesinnter*.

Although the *Neutäufer* group came to be composed of far more former Reformed church members than those of Anabaptist origin, doctrinally it has remained definitely Anabaptist. Through the years the women have retained the practice of wearing the black prayer veil while in church service. Their men join only the hospital corps in the army. If a member does otherwise he is dismissed from membership in the church.⁵¹

The followers of Fröhlich were not backward in proclaiming what they believed. They found no welcome among the Jura Anabaptists but in Alsace, Lorraine, Baden, and Württemberg they were able to found churches in the Anabaptist settlements. While drawing some members from the Anabaptists wherever they went, the most of them came from the Reformed and Lutheran churches.

⁴⁹ Most of the above information was derived from a ms. at the ATA on the *Neutäufer*. It is undated and unsigned. Portions are copied in Müller, *op. cit.*, 389-94. See also Geiser, *op. cit.*, 467-68, and W. Junger and Emil Blaser, "Kirche und 'Neutäufer' vor hundert Jahren." *Kirchgemeindeblatt Diessbach bei Büren*, XXIII, 2, 3.

⁵⁰ *Namensverzeichnis des Wiedertäufer im Oberamt Signau, aufgenommen 1827*. In 1835 an Alttäufer minister marked which group each person had decided to join. The list was continued until about 1850 as a record of *Alttäufer* members.

⁵¹ Interviews with *Neutäufer*.

Already in the 1840's some of their members found their way to America. In the Bernese Anabaptist communities of Wayne County, Ohio, and Adams County, Indiana, churches were founded. Among the Amish near Croghan, New York, and those of central Illinois they found open ears for their teachings. Strong churches were built at each of these places as well as many others through migration and missionary work.

Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Rumania also became scenes for their missionary endeavors in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Numerous churches with similar beliefs as those in Switzerland and America exist in each of those countries today.

About the turn of the century the followers of Fröhlich divided into a conservative group and a more progressive one. The wearing of the mustache appeared as the main question for this division in Switzerland. In America this division is being surmounted by close-co-operation of both groups and some talk of reunion.⁵²

THE CHURCH

Economic hardships were not alone the causes for many of the Anabaptists leaving canton Bern and Normanvillars during the first half of the nineteenth century. The unsettled political conditions were not encouraging to their religious life and principles. Slowly but finally the Anabaptists gained state recognition as a religious body. This brought with it more civic responsibility. In 1850 their request for exemption from military training was denied. During the following decade the largest single migration of Anabaptists from the Jura took place. At Normanvillars, too, they were pressed into army service as noncombatant teamsters and horsemen by Napoleon III. This helped them decide to leave. After 1840 only the Amish group was left at Normanvillars. All those of the Reist faction left in the decade and a half that preceded.

These widespread emigrations extracted entire family relationships from the Anabaptist communities. Entire settlements were depleted. With them went many of the church leaders. The leaders that remained were never able to rebuild the strength that

⁵² *Ibid.* For a good brief history of the *Neutäufer* see Hermann Rügger sen., *Aufzeichnungen über Entstehung und Bekenntnis der Gemeinschaft Evangelisch Taufgesinnter* (Zürich, 1948).

was lost. It must also be admitted that those more concerned with retaining their Anabaptist faith emigrated.

During the years of isolation and abhorrence of things of the "world" a certain pattern of dress had come to be accepted, especially by the women members of the Anabaptists. This included the somber-colored attire of neck scarf and apron as well as a black prayer covering. A growing desire to omit this formality especially among the young people met little resistance from the ministry. By the 1880's the young folks changed to the more modern pattern of dress.⁵³ However, never have they become slaves to modern style. It is said that when merchants from the cities want to rid themselves of their outmoded stock of clothing they have only to take them to the village markets where Anabaptists do their buying.

The spiritual life of the Anabaptists remaining in the Jura after the large migrations was quite low. They had retained the forms of their religion but the spirit was lacking to a great extent. Those who remained were widely scattered and the number of ministers and elders was greatly reduced. Meetings would usually only be held monthly in the farm home of a member. Later this changed to every three weeks. Meetings often lasted from ten in the morning until three in the afternoon. The missionary spirit was practically nonexistent. Their numbers only increased through their own children joining.⁵⁴

Slowly new life came into the scattered churches. The most influential minister in aiding this to come about was Ulrich Steiner of Trachselwald, elder of the Emmental church for many years. Deep religious experiences and convictions came to him at an early age. After having a glorious vision of seeing heaven he wrote a pamphlet entitled *Angenehme Stunden in Zion* which came into nearly every Anabaptist home in Bern as well as many in America.⁵⁵ He had difficulties with the authorities because of the 1823 order. Not only children of Anabaptists came to him for religious instruction. As proselyting was forbidden in this law he was imprisoned for several days. His work and ministry was greatly appreciated and was held in high respect by all with whom he came in contact. He died in 1877.⁵⁶

⁵³ Interview with Jacob Lerch, Moron near Bellelay.

⁵⁴ Geiser, *op. cit.*, 475.

⁵⁵ Ulrich Steiner, *Angenehme Stunden in Zion* (Biel, 1877),

⁵⁶ Geiser, *op. cit.*, 476-77.

In January, 1882, the Anabaptists of the Emmental founded a monthly periodical called the *Zionspilger*. Within five years it became the official periodical for all of the Anabaptists in Switzerland and about the same time became a weekly. Besides the purpose of serving as the official organ of the Anabaptists it also has carried with it the purpose of "bringing the Gospel to the people." The latter purpose has been stressed to the exclusion of the former so that now little appears in it of particular Anabaptist concern besides a list of places and times of Anabaptist meetings in Switzerland.⁵⁷

The work of Ulrich Steiner was ably taken over by Johann Gerber, familiarly known as "Stockhannes," Stock being the name of the farm near Langnau where he lived. In 1875 he was chosen as minister. With him the elder Christian Wüthrich worked tirelessly. At the end of the century a great revival swept through the land. At this time the Anabaptist church in the Emmental grew considerably. In fact the majority of the present membership of this congregation are descended from persons joining it at that time. Meetinghouses were built at Kehr near Langnau in 1888 and at Bowil and Bomatt in 1899.⁵⁸

In the Jura the work of the elder David Ummel in Chaux d'Abel was very outstanding. The education of the youth was his great concern. He built the schoolhouse in Chaux d'Abel for the Anabaptists. He lived to be nearly 99 years old, having been born in 1797 and dying in 1896.⁵⁹

David Lerch of Cortébertberg was another of the leading elders in the Jura. His work was done during the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the simple manner of his forefathers he traveled far to visit and hold meetings with his brethren.

Mennonite ministers from abroad also aided in the great task of rebuilding the spiritual life of the Jura Anabaptists during the latter part of the nineteenth century. The traveling minister, Jakob Hege from Reichen near Sinsheim, Baden, first came to the Jura in 1876 when he preached at Montoz. He made numerous visits at which times he would conduct Bible courses. These were conducted in the manner of discussions on pertinent Biblical questions. This

⁵⁷ *Der Zionspilger*, I (Jan., 1882), and following.

⁵⁸ Geiser, *op. cit.*, 478.

⁵⁹ Geiser, *op. cit.*, 478-79.

was greatly appreciated and caused a new life to come over the scattered congregations.⁶⁰

John A. Sprunger came to be a great force for revival among the Jura Anabaptists. He was born on the Münsterberg in 1852 but when only two years old migrated with his parents to Berne, Indiana.⁶¹ In 1889 he visited the land of his birth. Although not a minister he held meetings in the new meetinghouse of the Emmmental Anabaptists at Kehr near Langnau. It is reported that hundreds flocked to his revival meetings, many more than the meetinghouse could hold. In this manner he gave great impetus to the revival movement that was then taking place in the Emmmental among the Anabaptists. Sprunger also took part in the Anabaptist ministers' conference that was held during his stay. Through his suggestion reports of the ministers' meetings were begun.⁶² Through this contact the American Swiss Mennonite hymnal was later introduced and used in the Jura Anabaptist churches.⁶³

At the turn of the century Fritz Schüpbach, a minister from the Emmmental, helped revive spiritual interest among the Jura brethren.⁶⁴

The first two decades of the twentieth century brought numerous non-Anabaptist ministers to the Jura. Some of these gained great influence among the Jura brethren. Some worked only for confusion and restlessness among the Anabaptists. But they all brought something new and different to the isolated and monotonous life of the Anabaptists in the Jura. Whether good or bad the Anabaptists flocked to their meetings. Many admonishings and new theological thoughts were sown by them which worked more for disunity than an upbuilding of their spiritual fellowship. Among a certain circle of evangelistic ministers in Germany the Jura Anabaptists came to be known as an easily influenced group from which money could be easily extracted.⁶⁵

Among the non-Anabaptist ministers who came to be regarded quite highly by the Anabaptists were Georg Steinberger from Räm-

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 479.

⁶¹ Abraham J. and Samuel F. Sprunger, *Geschlechts- und Namens-Register der Familie Sprunger*, 9. (Berne, 1890), 9.

⁶² Geiser, *op. cit.*, 479.

⁶³ *Gesangbuch mit Noten* (Berne, Ind., 1890).

⁶⁴ Geiser, *op. cit.*, 480.

⁶⁵ Interview with Jura Anabaptists.

ismühle, canton Zurich. Steinberger's evangelistic work among the Anabaptists was followed by that of Jakob Vetter. Vetter was the founder of the German and Swiss tent meetings. He preached for many special meetings and led numerous Bible courses among the Jura Anabaptists.⁶⁶ He introduced a revival Gospel songbook called *Siegeslieder* in the congregations telling them to give their copies of *Gesangbuch mit Noten* to "some poor church."⁶⁷

During the present century numerous Jura Anabaptists have joined a sect known as the *Evangelischer Brüderverein*. The group is more commonly called *Bergerianer* after its founder, Fritz Berger of Brenzikofen. Berger started this movement soon after the turn of the century. Great emotional stress is put on conversion as well as the doctrine of sanctification resulting in a form of perfectionism. Meetings were early held by this sect in the Sonnenberg community. Many adherents were gained although not until 1930 did an actual break come about. At that time a discussion by Bergerian and Anabaptist groups was held at the chapel at Jeangisboden. Some members of the Zürcher, Lehmann, and other families left the Anabaptists and joined the *Evangelischer Brüderverein* at that time. Approximately seventy Anabaptists have affiliated themselves with the Bergerian group, coming from the communities of Sonnenberg, Tavannes, and Reconvilier.⁶⁸

Since World War II the American Mennonites have made numerous contacts with the Bernese Anabaptists. Through the Mennonite Central Committee, the American Mennonite agency for relief work, various American Mennonites have conducted Bible courses and special meetings among them. This has helped to renew spiritual interest. This same agency has encouraged them to make relief donations through its channels. Per cent-wise these gifts have been very significant. Through the American Mennonite College Association several young Anabaptist students of Switzerland have been given scholarships to study in American Mennonite colleges.

Regardless of efforts from within the Jura Anabaptist ranks and from other Mennonite sources to strengthen the scattered congregations, they have scarcely kept their own numbers during the

⁶⁶ Geiser, *op. cit.*, 480.

⁶⁷ Interview with Jura Anabaptists.

⁶⁸ Karl von Greyerz, *Die bernische Landeskirche in Lichte des Evangeliums* (Bern, 1941), 185. Also interview with Jura Anabaptists.

past century. A considerable number have left the high lonely settlements for the near-by villages and cities. Rarely do they retain church membership with the Anabaptists more than one generation. In 1948 one Anabaptist minister was detailed by the conference to visit the various persons who had been baptized Anabaptists but had since lost contact with their home church. Most of those that he visited had moved away from the isolated settlements and had joined a wide variety of churches, usually smaller sects. In his report back to the conference he analyzed the situation and gave some suggestions as to how the youth of the church might be encouraged to stay with the church.⁶⁹

A very significant development has taken place in the Emmental Anabaptist congregation within the past several years. This was the joining of that congregation with the state church in 1947. This was not a sporadic move on the part of an organized few but a development over the period of years. Friction between the state church and the Emmental Anabaptists became progressively less after the middle of the last century. In 1877 the state-church minister from Lauperswil, Mauerhofer, spoke high praises of the venerable Anabaptist minister, Ulrich Steiner, at the occasion of his funeral. During the pastorate of Ernst Müller at the Langnau state church (1884-1927) friendship and co-operation of the two groups ever grew. In 1895 Müller wrote a memorial work on the history of the Bernese Anabaptists in which a friendly spirit was shown throughout. The revival movement that took place at the turn of the century helped to further weld them together. Since persecution had come to an end there was no ground for continued suspicion and hatred. In about 1938 the Emmental Anabaptist church issued a confession of faith in which infant baptism as practiced by the state church is not considered evil. In 1941 a law was passed requiring all citizens to pay the state-church tax. This the Emmental Anabaptists did while those of the Jura made a special plea for exemption which was granted. In 1947 an agreement was made at Langnau whereby the local Anabaptist congregation would become a member of the state church although its organization and doctrines would be unaltered. No material benefits are gained by either the Anabap-

⁶⁹ Daniel Amstutz, "Mitteilungen an der Konferenz in Langnau über den Reisepredigerdienst," *Zionspilger*, 67. Jrg., 175-76 (Oct. 31, 1948).

tists or state church. It is in effect more a symbolic union of pledging to work together than an actual fusion into a part of the state church. This move has been strongly opposed by the Jura Anabaptists who at first thought seriously of expelling them from their conference.⁷⁰

Emmental Culture in the Bernese Jura

With few exceptions the Anabaptists living in the Jura at the beginning of the nineteenth century were descendants of families who fled from the Emmental in the early eighteenth century. Besides taking their beliefs and practices of religion with them they also held fast to cultural patterns learned in the Emmental.

The religion of the Anabaptists permeated every phase of their lives. For them religion was not only something for Sunday but for every day of the week as well. Their dress showed similarities to the Emmental costume although infinitely more plain. The use of the mirror was considered as vanity, so was avoided. They did not dance nor participate in games. Nor did they frequent taverns or drink to excess of alcoholic beverages. They sang much but mostly pious hymns.⁷¹ No musical instruments were to be found among them. Art had no fertile soil in which to grow in this atmosphere. The few designs found on their houses or on linen pieces were of a simple nature.

Their joys were found in their work. Usually several would work together at a task. This helped time pass quickly. Visiting friends and relatives and aiding an unfortunate member were other ways in which a vacation from the routine was found.

Many changes have taken place during the past hundred years. There is no longer a set pattern of dress. The mirror is used and some art finds a place in their homes. But distances remain so great and travel is slow for them; so frequent and close contacts outside their circles are not numerous.

The dialect of the Emmental is the language they use at home as well as in their church services. The written German is learned in their schools but finds little oral use. For over two hundred years they have remained little islands of German-speaking Switzerland

⁷⁰ Interviews with Anabaptists.

⁷¹ Charles Ferd. Morel, *Abrégé de L'histoire et de la Statistique du Ci-devant Evêché de Bâle* (Strasbourg, 1813), 273-76.

surrounded with the French-Swiss culture native to the Jura. The Bernese Anabaptists who moved to the Palatinate and Alsace found themselves speaking the dialect of the region within a generation. But not so with those settling in non-Germanic areas. The Jura settlements, the one at Normanvillars, as well as those made in America prove this fact.

Non-Anabaptist German-speaking Swiss who moved to the Jura forgot their native tongue quickly. Besides their isolation a main factor that has helped the Anabaptists keep their language has been their parochial schools.⁷²

Distance and language kept the Anabaptists from attending the public schools in the Jura. Parents taught their children the essential subjects of reading, writing, and some arithmetic. While few could be considered illiterate none could boast of great scholarly achievement.

The first indication of a more systematic method of teaching their children was started in the decade of 1830. Johannes Baumgartner, a young member of the Anabaptists, attended the normal school operated by a teacher named Mülheim at Oberwyl where he received a certificate in 1831. He was engaged to teach the children of the Anabaptists at Sonnenberg in 1836. It was his task to make a circuit to various homes in the community where the children of several families would gather for instruction.⁷³ The Chaux d'Abel Anabaptist community opened a similar school in December, 1836, with David Ritter of Reichenbach (not an Anabaptist) as teacher.⁷⁴

In the district of Moutier the Anabaptist minister, Peter Sprunger, reported in 1837 that Anabaptist schools were located in the following places: Chaluët and Graiterie in commune Court, Mont Girod, Münsterberg, Moron, and Bellelay.⁷⁵

In time there came to be a school in each Anabaptist community of any size. As families emigrated schools ceased operation. They were entirely supported by the Anabaptists until the 1890's. For

⁷² A. J. Amstutz-Tschirren, "Jura," *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, II, 448.

⁷³ Letter of June 28, 1836, written by C. F. Morel, Reformed Church minister at Corgemont. Found in *Primar-Schulen Lokales 1831-55. Amtsbezirk Courtelary. Deutsche Schulen*. SAB. BB IIIb, 68035. Also Baumgartner, *op. cit.*

⁷⁴ Letter of Jan. 17, 1837, by Bandelier. In same folio as above.

⁷⁵ Letter by Peter Sprunger (1837). Found in *Primar-Schulen Lokales 1831-55. Amtsbezirk Moutier. Deutsche Schulen*. SAB. BB IIIb, 68090.

the past twenty-five years the majority of the expenses have been financed by the state and commune. At the present time these schools are carried on at Chaux d'Abel, Mont-Tramelan, Moron, Montbautier, Le Perceux, Les Mottes, and Jeangisboden. They all carry on a regular nine-year school program. These schools have been a mainstay in their attempt to retain their language and culture.

When buildings were constructed for church purposes during the past sixty years a room was usually constructed in each of them for school. Ministers have often been teachers of the Anabaptist schools although they have more often had to resort to persons outside their church for this task. Some of these would join the Anabaptists while others did not. Many have co-operated with the goals of the Anabaptists but some have utterly failed in this respect.⁷⁶

Much attention has been focused on these few small struggling schools during the past several years by the Swiss government, press, and people. The first sign of difficulty came immediately before World War I when a great hatred of all things German swept especially through the French-speaking part of Switzerland. Great misinterpretation was given in the Jura press concerning a gift to the Anabaptist schools by their coreligionists in Germany. The French Swiss press explained this as a gift of the German government for the purpose of Germanizing the Jura.⁷⁷ After World War II much the same anti-German reaction took place. Some of the local communes have ceased to aid in the financial support of the schools, resulting in a grave financial problem for the Anabaptists.⁷⁸

Farming techniques, language, religious practices, and the mind-set of these people were transplanted from the Emmental to the Jura. Their independence in economy, culture, and religious matters from their French-speaking neighbors has caused them to be referred to as "a nation within a nation."⁷⁹ The friendly and unfriendly interpretation of this condition has caused much of the Jura Anabaptist's history during the past 250 years.

⁷⁶ Interviews with Jura Anabaptists.

⁷⁷ From clippings of the period collected by A. J. Amstutz.

⁷⁸ See note 76.

⁷⁹ Christian Lerch, "Ein Volk im Volke. Die jurassischen Täufer," *Der kleine Bund*, IX (May 20, 1928), pp. 161-64.

Location

The location of the Anabaptists in the canton of Bern during the fore part of the nineteenth century can be very minutely ascertained from the census reports compiled as a result of the *Täufer-Reglement* of 1823. A summary of these statistics for 1823 follows:

		Totals
<i>District of Aarwangen</i>		
Langenthal (<i>Heimat</i> of Geiser family living at La Chaux-de-fonds.)	39	
Rohrbach	8	47
<i>District of Burgdorf</i>		
Thorberg		7
<i>District of Courtelary</i>		
Community of Büderich and la Heutte	89	
Community of Cortébert-Matten	40	
Community of Sonnenberg	200	
Persons attending Anabaptist services in canton Neuenburg	45	374
<i>District of Delsberg</i>		
Located in communities of Develier, Courtételle, Bourrignon, and Pleigne		81
<i>District of Freibergen</i>		
Parish of Les Bois	26	
Parish of Soubey	3	29
<i>District of Frutigen</i>		
Krattigen (<i>Heimat</i> of Stäudler family living at La Chaux-de-fonds)		12
		16
<i>District of Konolfingen</i>		
<i>District of Münster</i>		
Community in communes Court and Münster	117	
Community in communes of Münster, Perrefitte, Eschert, Greefelden, Roche, and Rennendorf	141	
Community in communes of Malleray, Champoz, Sorvilier, a portion of Court and Münster and Petit Champoz	64	
Community of Souboz, Sornetan, Monible, Châtelat, la Joux, and Saicourt	147	469
<i>District of Nidau</i>		
Community of Biel		16
<i>District of Pruntrut</i>		
Located in communes of Pruntrut, Lugnez, Boncourt, Buix, Mormont, Monterri, Valbert, and St. Ursitz		55

District of Signau

Upper Anabaptist church	17	
Commune Langnau	76	
Commune Trub	23	
Commune Eggiwil	16	
Commune Signau	7	
Commune Lauperswil	8	
Communes of Schangnau and Rüderswil	2	149

District of Thun

Parish of Hilterfingen (<i>Heimat</i> of Ritschard and Stähli families living in canton Neuenburg)	50	
(<i>Heimat</i> of Freyenberg family living in Land Baden and canton Basel)	23	
(<i>Heimat</i> of Winteregg family living at Souboz)	12	85

District of Trachselwald

Communes of Lützelflüh, Sumiswald, Trachselwald, and Huttwil	25
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Total number of Anabaptists living in canton Bern in 1823	1,229
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Total number of Anabaptists holding citizenship in a commune in canton Bern but residing elsewhere.	136
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Total	1,365 ⁸⁰
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Until today the Anabaptists have remained in the same general districts where they were found in 1823. Within these districts great shiftings have taken place. This has been the natural outcome of the emigrations to America during the first half of the nineteenth century. In some communities where only a few families were left after the migration the remaining ones would move to a larger Anabaptist settlement. Here and there one still finds bits of crumbling walls and the remains of old orchards from deserted Anabaptist settlements. One of these can be found on the southern slope of Monto. Most of these deserted areas have been turned into pasture land. Church communities that no longer exist include Tscharner, Vanne, Monto, Chaluet, Münsterberg, and la Ferrière.⁸¹

Congregations that are still in existence in canton Bern include Gross-Lützel which lies north of Delémont and includes all the scattered families in that district. The Porrentruy congregation includes the families in the district of Porrentruy, most of which live

⁸⁰ *Controlle der Wiedertäufer*, I, 120 ff. SAB. B III, 388.

⁸¹ A. J. Amstutz-Tschirren, "Jura," *Menmonitisches Lexikon*, II, 447.

near Courgenay. West of Moutier is the Kleintal congregation with chapels serving also as schools located at Le Perceux and Moron. The largest Jura congregation is the one called Sonnenberg, named from the mountain on which it is located. This includes three chapel-schools, Jeangisboden, Fürstenberg, and Les Mottes. Above Cortébert is the congregation known as Cortébert-Berg. Farther west is the congregation of Chaux-d'Abel which has both a building for school purposes and one for a chapel. As in times past the Anabaptists living in the extreme southwestern end of the Bernese Jura belong to the only congregation now existing in canton Neuenburg, namely, La Chaux-de-fonds. The meetinghouse for this congregation is located at Les Bulles.⁸² The largest of the Bernese congregations is located in the ancestral home of all Bernese Anabaptists, namely, the Emmental. The main chapel was built in 1888 in the village of Kehr near Langnau. Other chapels were built by the congregation in 1899 at Aebnit near Bowil and at Bomatt.⁸³

⁸² Samuel Geiser, "The Mennonites of Switzerland and France," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XII, 59-60. Also *Christlicher Gemeinde-Kalender für das Jahr 1941*, 156-57.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

VI

Migration of Bernese Anabaptists to America in the Nineteenth Century

Introduction

The difficult economic conditions at the beginning of the nineteenth century caused many a Swiss to look for better conditions across the sea. Added to this ever-present economic pressure another factor entered into the picture to add impetus to the decision of the Anabaptists to leave, namely, the uncertainty of religious toleration. These factors took different proportions during the several periods of the migration.

The first emigration of the Bernese Anabaptists occurred in 1816, when Jacob Schrag of Wynigen, living in the Münstertal, migrated to Pennsylvania. The reports of Benedicht Schrag, his father, who left the following year, spurred others on to make a similar move. The number leaving continued to increase until 1830, when it reached its high point. Other periods seeing considerable Anabaptist migration were the 1850's after the failure to be allowed military exemption and again in the 1870's when compulsory military training was actually carried through.

The long, hard sea journey filled many a letter written by unskilled scribes to friends and relatives left behind. This adventure became the source for tales to children and grandchildren in years to come.

Because of a common religion and close family ties the Anabaptists sought to found communities of their own. Within twenty years after Schrag arrived three settlements were begun. As one settlement became crowded others farther west were started. These followed the general westward movement of the nineteenth century from Ohio to Oregon.

Conditions Leading to Migration

The economic hardships of the Jura together with the extremely difficult times experienced during the "hunger years" convinced

many that the only solution to their problems was to emigrate. The details of these conditions were narrated in the preceding chapter.

With this dominant economic factor was the ever-present uncertainty of their nonresistant principle being recognized. As time passed the formula became reversed so that the economic factor was outweighed by the religious reason after 1850. Although the decade of the 1870's brought numerically few Anabaptists to America those who did come did so almost purely for religious reasons.

First to Leave

The first recorded indication that Anabaptists had left for America was given by the Reformed minister of Münster, Charles Ferdinand Morel. In 1817 he wrote: "At this moment the Anabaptists have sent two representatives to America to survey the possibilities of establishing homes there where they would have liberty of conscience."¹

There is no indication who these two persons were to whom Morel refers. It is possible to ascertain from other sources, however, the names of some of the first Bernese Anabaptist settlers who did come at this time. Jacob Schrag appears to have been the first to make this trip. He arrived in the *Klöz* (Glades) in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, in 1816.² In all likelihood he was the son of Benedicht Schrag who migrated to America in 1817.³

On July 4, 1817, four families boarded a Rhine boat at Strasbourg to start their long boat journey via Amsterdam to America. The families were of Bendicht Schrag, Johannes Augsburger, Hans Nussbaum, and Christian Brand. Hans Burkhalter⁴, a young

¹ *Deux Mots sur les Anabaptistes de l'Evêché de Bâle*. This document is neither signed nor dated. The handwriting is identical with that found of Charles F. Morel. In the archive folder it is placed with other material of 1817. Located in *Akten betreffend die Wiedertäufer*. SAB. B III, 386.

² *Schriften betreffend die Auswanderung nach Brasilien und Nord-Amerika, 1810-1821*. V. I, p. 13. This information is in a letter written by Johannes Nussbaum at Wooster, Ohio, on Feb. 8, 1818. This is referred to hereafter as *Nussbaum Letter*, I.

³ *Taufrodell der Bürger von Wynigen*, IX, 275. A Jacob Schrag is recorded as having been born May 5, 1792, to Bendicht Schrag and his first wife, Maria Zurflüh.

⁴ Hans Burkhalter was born in the commune of Souboz on July 27, 1797, the son of Christen Burkhalter and Anna Schrag. The *Heimat* of his family is Langnau where they are recorded in the civil records. See *Langnau Bürgerrodell* V, 147. The mother was a sister to Bendicht Schrag, making young Hans his nephew. It appears that when in Ohio Burkhalter married Barbara Schrag, the daughter of Benedicht Schrag, and his own first cousin. See *Burkholder Family Record* compiled by A. D. Burkholder, Marshallville, Ohio. Christen Burkhalter, the father, died in 1814 leaving a

Anabaptist, accompanied the Schrag family. The Schrag⁵ and Augsburg⁶ families were known to be Bernese Anabaptists. There is some indication that the Brand family was also Anabaptist.⁷ That the Nussbaum family was Anabaptist is more doubtful.⁸ At Amsterdam a Mennonite minister aided them on their way.⁹ They set sail on July 25 from Amsterdam and after an adventurous journey of eleven weeks landed at Philadelphia on October 10. The Augsburg family stayed in Pennsylvania, settling in Liberty Township, Tioga County, for some twelve years before moving to Wayne County, Ohio, then after thirteen years moved to Adams County, Indiana. The Brand family moved from Somerset County, Pennsylvania, to Wayne County, Ohio, where some years later he became a minister in the Oak Grove Church.¹⁰ Hans Nussbaum and Bendicht Schrag and son went on to Ohio where, with the aid of some Amish men near Wooster, they chose to buy land on which to settle. They wanted to go south of the Ohio River but were persuaded otherwise by the Amish who claimed it to be unhealthy farther south. Their families followed them by the next March to the

family of nine children from 2 to 21 years of age to aid their mother in making a living. See *Langnau Bürgerrodel* V, 147. After the mother died in 1824 the family went to join their brother Hans in Wayne County, Ohio. See *Controlle der Wiedertäufer*, I, 68. SAB. B III, 388.

⁵ Bendicht Schrag was the grandson of Ulrich Schrag, born 1688, a native of Läumberg near Wynigen. He moved to the commune of Eschert in the Münstertal in 1713, being one of the early Anabaptists to settle there. See SAB. B 241a *Mappe* 25. He raised five children there. Two of the sons, Bendicht and Christen, applied and received *Heimatscheine* from Wynigen in 1763. See RM 267/197 (Oct. 20, 1763). Ulrich Schrag's son, Bendicht, born 1728, married Anna Blaser, an Anabaptist who was a native of the Oberthal. They were the parents of Bendicht Schrag, born Feb. 22, 1776, as well as four other children. See *Taufrodel Wynigen*, VII, 388. This second Bendicht Schrag was married three times and became the father of nine children. See *Taufrodel der Bürger von Wynigen*, IX, 275. It appears that eight of his children, together with his third wife, accompanied him to Ohio in 1817.

⁶ Johannes Augsburg was born Nov. 7, 1783, on the Münsterberg, the son of Johannes Augsburg of Langnau and Anna Hebeisen of Eggwil. Johannes Augsburg, the second, married Elisabeth Jacob of Langnau on July 26, 1805. See *Langnau Bürgerrodel*, V, 118.

⁷ Müller, *op. cit.*, 370. Brand is mentioned here as a *Glaubensgenosse* of Schrag. Later in life he became a minister of the Oak Grove Church in Wayne County.

⁸ From a reading of Nussbaum's two letters it is difficult to ascertain definitely whether he was or was not an Anabaptist. He appears to have originated from the Bucheggberg in canton Solothurn. See *Nussbaum Letter*, I, II. It is known that he was a Mennonite by 1831, as he was likely ordained a minister of the Gospel for the Ashland County, Ohio, congregation before that time. See John Umble, "Extinct Ohio Mennonite Churches. V. Ashland County, II," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XIX, 3 (July, 1945), pp. 222-23.

⁹ *Nussbaum Letter*, II.

¹⁰ Letter to author from John Umble dated Jan. 11, 1952.

farms they chose near the present site of Smithville, Wayne County, Ohio.¹¹

Letters from the First Emigrants

It is reported that Bendicht Schrag wrote a long letter praising the opportunities and advantages in his newly adopted American home.¹² This letter aroused much interest in emigration among his brethren in the Jura.¹³

The only letters preserved from this first group to leave the Jura were written by the one of the party who is least suspected to have been an Anabaptist at the time, Hans Nussbaum. In a letter written on February 8, 1818, he described the ocean voyage in some detail. In a previous letter he described the voyage to Amsterdam.¹⁴ Nussbaum told his friends and relatives of dangers encountered along the way. He mentioned persons at the port who tried to swindle them. Each significant event of the journey as well as the food and passengers were described by him. He gave worthy suggestions of foods and supplies to take for the journey. Their trip across Pennsylvania to Ohio he traced very precisely mentioning each Amish settlement at which they stopped, praising their hospitality. This letter and the ones the others of the party evidently wrote back to their Swiss friends and relatives proved very valuable as their guide in many decisions.¹⁵ Each one who followed this first party to America wrote similar letters improving on the ones that they had read and followed for their journey. These letters had a large circulation and some were copied many times. Of the many letters and copies of letters from the first ten years of the migration only a few have survived. After a letter became outmoded by newer information it was usually destroyed. The past fifty years have seen a considerable amount of this most valuable source of history go up in smoke.

¹¹ *Nussbaum Letter*, II.

¹² This letter is no longer extant but is referred to in Moser, *op. cit.*, 9, and *History of Sonnenberg Church*, 1.

¹³ Moser, *op. cit.*, 9.

¹⁴ *Nussbaum Letter*, I. Refers to letter he wrote in Amsterdam which is no longer extant.

¹⁵ *Nussbaum Letter*, I, II.

Those Who Followed

In 1818 a young brother and sister, Johannes and Anna Amstutz of Sigriswil, left their Münsterberg home for America. He was only eighteen and she but seventeen. After a fifty-four-day journey on an ill-equipped sailboat they arrived in New York. Being in debt some \$50 they immediately sought work. They went to the Mennonite settlement in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, where they sought work at the farm of Abraham Oberholtzer. They were soon able to pay their debts. After he had earned some money he went to the Sonnenberg settlement in Wayne County, Ohio, in about the year 1821, in the company of Christian Bösiger who had immigrated from the Normanvillars settlement in 1819. Johannes Amstutz married Verena Lehman in 1823 and they together with their children moved to Putnam County, Ohio, in 1850 where they spent the rest of their lives. Anna Amstutz married an Amishman named Samuel Hochstetler in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. They moved to Holmes County, Ohio, and later to Allen County, Ohio.¹⁶

As a direct result of the Schrag letter the families of Peter Lehmann, Isaac Sommer, Ulrich Lehmann, and David Kirchhofer¹⁷ decided to leave their homes on Mont Girod and Sonnenberg in the Jura. They left Switzerland on April 15, 1819.¹⁸ After traveling across France they embarked at Le Havre. The trip to New York took forty-seven days. They traveled the route to Ohio via Philadelphia, Lancaster, Pittsburgh, and Canton to Wooster as had evidently been outlined in the letter that Schrag had written to them. For a month they lived in a schoolhouse some four miles from Wooster. During this time they sought out land to purchase.¹⁹ They decided on what is now the heart of the Sonnenberg community in eastern Wayne County, Ohio. They soon named their community after the one they had just left—Sonnenberg. Only a lone backwoodsman was living there when they arrived.²⁰

During the same year, 1819, the first Anabaptists left the Normanvillars community for America. Christian Bösiger of Rum-

¹⁶ Peter B. Amstutz, *Geschichtliche Ereignisse der Schweizer Mennoniten Ansiedlung*, in Allen and Putman County, Ohio (Bluffton, 1925), 1-2.

¹⁷ For a poem he wrote before leaving see p. 126.

¹⁸ Sem Geiger, *David Kirchhofer Genealogy*, 1.

¹⁹ *History of Sonnenberg Church*, 1.

²⁰ Moser, *op. cit.*, 9.

isberg, a young man of twenty-three, left Le Havre in June, 1819. After arriving in New York he followed the road those who had preceded him had taken and arrived in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. For several years he was employed here in transporting merchandise to various parts of the United States for a Mr. McCall. After several years of this type of work he went to Lincoln County, Ontario, where he did farm work and weaving for several years. After this he moved to Wayne County, Ohio, and then in 1836 to Putnam County, Ohio, where he put in the last claim for land in that settlement.²¹

Peter Lehmann and Isaac Sommer of the party that founded the new Sonnenberg settlement in Wayne County, Ohio, wrote a detailed report to their brethren advising them to come.²² Because of this report a larger group left in 1821. In this company were Hans Lehmann, an elder, Abraham Lehmann, Hans and Christian Lehmann from Brichon, Abraham and David Zürcher, Jacob Bichsel, Jacob Moser and Peter Hofstetter, Charlie Holzer, a Nussbaum, and an Imhof. This party was greatly anticipated by those who were already there. Especially was this true because with them was a minister. They then began church meetings.²³

In 1822 Ulrich Gerber, a minister, Michael Gerber, a deacon, and Jacob Gerber left their Jura homes for the new Sonnenberg settlement. In 1824 those who emigrated were Peter and Hans Wahli, Johannes and Abraham Tschantz, Johannes and Christian Wahli, Christian and Abraham Gilliom, Christian Beer, Nicolas Hofstetter, Abraham Falb, Michael Bögli, Hans Luginbühl, David Baumgartner, Ulrich Sommer, and Peter Schneck.²⁴

During this time the "America fever" also took root in the Anabaptist settlement of Normanvillars. Following his son who went in 1819, Christian Bösiger and family went to Pennsylvania in 1822. His wife died in 1824. The following year they went to Wilmot Township, Waterloo County, Ontario. Later all of his children except two daughters joined the Putnam County, Ohio, settlement.²⁵ For many years he was a deacon of the church.²⁶

²¹ Peter D. Amstutz, *Christian Basinger*.

²² *History of Sonnenberg Church*, 1.

²³ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ L. J. Burkholder, *History of the Mennonites in Ontario* (Markham, 1935), 280.

²⁶ Suter, Chr., et al. *Church Book of the Mennonite Church in Putnam County, Ohio*, 265.

In 1823 Michael Neuenschwander left the Normanvillars community with his family. They settled north of the Sonnenberg settlement on the Little Chippewa Creek in Green Township, Wayne County, Ohio.²⁷

In the following years others came from Normanvillars to this location and formed what is known as the Chippewa settlement. Among them were Bishop Daniel Steiner, Ulrich and Christian Steiner, who came in 1825 and started a church there shortly afterwards.²⁸

Arriving at Alexandria, District of Columbia (now Virginia), in 1824 were Christian Bösiger, Mrs. Verena Dühler, and Christian Luginbühl with their families, and Peter Steiner who was single. They came from the Normanvillars settlement. At the same time came Peter Thut with his family and Peter and Verena Bichsel from the Kleintal community in the Jura. They tarried a while with their brethren in Rockingham County, Virginia, and then went to Ohio. They did not go as a group, however. The Christian Bösiger family moved to Columbiana County, Ohio, in 1833, and to Putnam County in 1836. The Christian Luginbühl family, the Dühler family, David Althaus (Peter Thut's stepson), and Peter and Verena Bichsel almost immediately went on to the Sonnenberg settlement, settling some ten miles south of it in Paint Township, Holmes County, Ohio. The Thut family soon joined them in Holmes County buying a farm adjacent to Bichsel's and very near Luginbühl's. Within twenty years this small group, family by family, moved to the Putnam County settlement.²⁹

The migration continued unabated for the following ten years. In 1835 an especially large group came from Normanvillars directly to the Putnam County, Ohio, community. This was the result of a letter written by Michael Neuenschwander, who had settled here in 1833, to some of his relatives.³⁰ Several Steiner brothers and sisters with their families and three Geiger brothers with their families made up the greater part of this group.³¹ Bishop Christian Steiner,

²⁷ Michael Neuenschwander, *Diary*.

²⁸ *History of Sonnenberg Church*, 3.

²⁹ Reuben Thut, *Thut Family History*, 1-4. Christian Bösiger, *Family Register*. David C. Bixel, *Bichsel History*, 5.

³⁰ This letter is no longer extant.

³¹ Interview with Peter Geiger, Bluffton, Ohio.

who was among this group, became the first minister of the Putnam County congregation.³²

By the end of the 1830's the Normanvillars settlement had been nearly emptied of its Anabaptist population.³³ They had formed the settlement of Chippewa in Wayne County, Ohio, and the large settlement in Putnam County, Ohio.

In 1835 David Baumgartner, a bishop, Christian Tschantz, a deacon, and Johannes, Peter, and Abraham Tschantz emigrated from their Jura homes to America. After spending three years in Wayne County, Ohio, some members of the Baumgartner family went west to Adams County, Indiana, where they founded a new Bernese Anabaptist community.³⁴

During the years 1840 to 1845 only eight Anabaptist families are definitely known to have left the Jura for America. Among these was a minister, Johannes Amstutz of Sigriswil, living at Bürkisberg, district of Delemont. He settled in the newly formed community in Putnam County, Ohio, in 1842. The year 1846 found four families and a single person making the journey from the Jura to America.³⁵

The universal military training law of 1850 caused much consternation among the Bernese Anabaptists. Their petition for exemption was not answered; so their thoughts again turned to migration.³⁶

In January, 1852, a number left the Emmmental. Among these were two ministers, Matthias Strahm and Ulrich Kipfer. Most of these settled in the community started by the Baumgartners some fourteen years earlier in Adams County, Indiana.³⁷

In the words of one of the Jura Anabaptists their feelings were aptly described:

In the summer and fall of 1851 the fever to migrate became very strong in the Anabaptist churches of Sonnenberg, Münsterberg, and Kleintal in the Jura . . . crop failures, high rents and stricter laws on military service were the chief factors in this migration.³⁸

³² Peter D. Amstutz, *Christian Steiner*.

³³ The Amish families of Rich, Klopfenstein, Kaufmann, Graber, Hilty, and Roth remained. *Florimont Etat Civil*.

³⁴ Baumgartner, *op. cit.*

³⁵ *Pässe*, I, II, *passim*. SAB.

³⁶ See p. 120.

³⁷ Eva F. Sprunger, *The First Hundred Years* (Berne, 1938), 5.

³⁸ Abraham Zurflüh, *Die Reise von der Schweiz nach Amerika* (Berne, 1914), 32.

On March 9, 1852, a group of about eighty Anabaptists left the Jura Mountains for America. They first stopped in Wayne County, Ohio, but by July most of them had found their way to Adams County, Indiana, settling where the town of Berne is now located. Among this group was a minister, Peter S. Lehmann. They did not join the Baumgartner congregation but organized their own. Most of this group of eighty were members of the Sprunger family either by blood or through marriage.³⁹

The following spring (1853) nearly as large a migration took place although it was not carried out in an organized fashion as in 1852. During this time at least six families and seven single persons left.⁴⁰ Even more left in the spring of 1854. At least ten families and six single persons left for America at this time. The movement took a sharp downward turn in 1855 when only four families left, two of those being from the Emmental.⁴¹

Only a few persons ventured to America during the Civil War years. During the latter part of the decade of 1860 only two families and two single persons left. When compulsory military service was actually put into effect in 1874 another wave of migration took place. Most of this found its outlet in Alsace.⁴² However, at least seven families and two single persons went to America.⁴³ Only scattered persons and families left after this time.⁴⁴

From 1816 until 1875 more Anabaptists left their Jura and Normanvillars homes than remained. It has been estimated that some 1,200 transferred from European soil to America during this period.⁴⁵

The Journey

Five general routes are known to have been traveled by the Bernese Anabaptist emigrants on their way to Ohio and Indiana. They were briefly: (1) From 1816 to 1820: Rhine boat to Amsterdam, sailboat to Philadelphia, by foot via the Mennonite and Amish settlements through the length of Pennsylvania to Wayne County,

³⁹ Sprunger, *op. cit.*, 5.

⁴⁰ Pässe, IV. SAB.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Lerch, *op. cit.*, 162.

⁴³ Pässe, VI. SAB.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ C. Henry Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites* (Newton, 1950), 583.

Ohio. (2) From 1819 to 1840: overland by wagon to Le Havre, sailboat to New York, by foot or wagon through the length of Pennsylvania via the Mennonite settlements to Wayne County and on to Putnam County, Ohio. (3) From 1824 to 1826: overland by wagon to Le Havre, sailboat to Alexandria, District of Columbia, overland by foot or wagon to Wayne County, Ohio, via the Mennonite settlement in Rockingham County, Virginia, and later to Putnam County, Ohio. (4) From 1850 to 1860: overland by railroad and stage-coach to Le Havre, sailboat to New York, river and canal boats up the Hudson River and through the Erie Canal to Buffalo, to Cleveland by steamboat, wagon to Wayne County and on to Adams County, Indiana, by wagon or on foot. (5) From 1865 on: to Le Havre by train, steamship to New York, railroad through Pennsylvania to Ohio and Indiana.

A description of the first route is given by Johannes Nussbaum, a member of the first party to leave. His description of the journey reminds one of that taken by the Anabaptists from the Pfalz just a hundred years before. It is very likely that only the first few groups of the nineteenth-century emigration traveled this route. Excerpts from Nussbaum's description follow:

On the 4th of July 1817 we [Nussbaum, Schrag, Augsburgers and Brand families] boarded a frigate at Amsterdam. Francis was the captain. He looked after us very well. But I would warn you of a certain Peter Ullerich at Amsterdam who is a "slave dealer." He transported three shiploads of Württembergers to America treating them more like cattle than human beings. He packs them in his boat like herrings As the wind was not good we could not sail until the 25th. By the 29th we had gotten only as far as we should have with only one day's good wind. On the third of August we stopped at Texel (Holland) to load food. We had to wait until the 5th to sail. Then we had a good wind that gave us speed. . . . On the same morning a young man from Baden died who had come aboard ill. He was buried at sea. On the 8th of August we could still see the English coast. For the next four days we had bad wind. The captain decided to turn back and go completely around England through the North Sea. On the 17th we were in an area as cold as Switzerland in winter. An old woman died on the 28th On September 11 we had an ill wind that blew us back. On the 16th we came on a fishing bank. We saw seven fishing ships there The captain went to one in a small boat and traded wine, cheese and zwiebach for fish. . . . We saw the first land on October 5 and at the same time we got a pilot on board. But shortly we got into the worst storm that we encountered . . . waves were as large as high mountains. By the 9th the wind had abated enough for us to enter the Delaware River. Here we saw beautiful land on each

side of us. This encouraged us greatly. At three o'clock in the afternoon we dropped anchor and nurses from a clinic came to give us a physical examination. As we were all well we could proceed to Philadelphia. For our fortunate journey we had God to thank as well as our American captain. Many Germans came on board ship and gave us apples and bread. Other persons came to hire passengers to work for them. They paid them 5,040 bz. (\$1,000) per year Dear friends, very likely you would wish to know what our rations were while on board ship. Monday, one pound meal. Tuesday, one pound beef. Wednesday, one halfpound bacon and peas. Thursday, one pound beef and barley. Friday, one pound flour. Saturday, one half pound bacon and sauerkraut. Each day we got two glasses of brandy. Each week we got six pounds of bread. Each day we got three and one third liters of water. Each week we got one pound of butter, one pound of cheese. We received one and two thirds liter of vinegar per week per four persons On the 16th of October we went 23 miles from Philadelphia to a settlement of five Amish families. On the 17th we then went to the Pequea. Here we stayed a week to get deloused. The brethren bestowed upon us food, including butter, meat, bread, and vegetables. From there they guided the way for us to the Kalchlis [Kishacoquillas]. There is also an Amish community. We stayed another week here. We were given very fine treatment here. They guided us to Somerset County which was a nine day journey. Here in the Klöz [Glades] is another Amish community. In all these places they gave us much to eat. They charged us nothing. Jacob Schrag, who had come in 1816, saw to it that each of our families had a home to stay in over winter. The young people in our company went to work. On the 27th [October 1817] Schrag and I and his son started on our journey to Ohio in order to find a new fatherland. We went via Pittsburgh, New Washington, Steubenville, to Walnut Creek where there is also an Amish community. On the 6th of December we stayed overnight with a man named Stutzman who owns 900 acres of land. On December 9 we came to Wooster to an Amish community. The brethren here went with us to choose land. Schrag and I each chose 160 acres. We also chose land for the other families. We waited here over winter. We had wished to go south of the Ohio river to choose land but the brethren advised against that as there is much disease and little good water Here the land is fertile and level but not too level. . . . Anyone who wishes to make this journey should think twice. The trip is difficult; more difficult than dangerous. I again say that I advise no one to come who does not find pleasure in work. The sleepy and lazy may well stay at home. . . .

Wooster, 430 miles from Philadelphia

(signed) Hans Nussbaum⁴⁶

The trip of Peter Lehman, Isaac Sommer, Ulrich Lehmann, and David Kirchhofer and their families is described as follows:

The party started on their journey on April 15, 1819. After a long journey through France they arrived at Le Havre where they embarked. After a forty-seven-day sea journey they arrived in New York. They went

⁴⁶ Nussbaum Letter, I.

via Philadelphia, Lancaster, Pittsburgh, and Canton to within four miles of Wooster where they lived together for a month in a schoolhouse. After looking around they purchased land.⁴⁷

From the diary of Michael Neuenschwander, the first settler of the Putnam County, Ohio, community, the following extract is taken concerning his journey with his family to America:

On May 15, 1823, myself, wife and three children left Faverois (Canton Delle, Territoire de Belfort) and started our journey for America. After fifteen days' travel we reached Paris where we stayed overnight. On May 31 we started toward our port of embarkation, Havre de Grace (Le Havre) where we arrived June 5, 1823. While waiting for our ship to sail, Michael, our fifth child, was born on board the ship *Eolus* in the harbor of Havre de Grace June 11, 1823. Our ship sailed the next day and after a voyage of forty-three days arrived safely in New London [Connecticut] at noon, July 25. We sailed from the New London harbor July 26, and passed New York at 4 p.m. July 28, arriving at Amboy [New Jersey] at 8 a.m. July 29, 1823.

We went to New York City which is 18 miles from Amboy. Then we went to Bethlehem, 55 miles away, and on to Allentown, another 18 miles. From here it is 36 miles to Reading and from Reading to Harrisburg, 50 miles. We were now close to the mountains. We went to Chambersburg, 20 miles away. We drove 10 miles to the Allegheny mountains and then 24 miles to McConnellsburg. We went on to the village of Stoyestown, a distance of 35 miles, and then to Greensburg, 32 miles. We travelled another 17 miles to Pittsburgh. Our four children were all sick. Our little son, Peter, died and we buried him there. He died on September 16, 1823. On September 27 we left Pittsburgh for Beavertown [Beaver], twenty-eight miles; then Lisbon [Ohio], thirty miles; next to Canton, thirty-five miles and on to Dover. On October 4, 1823, we reached Little Chippewa in Green Township, Wayne County, Ohio. On March 29, 1824, I bought 74¾ acres of land. . . . April 23, 1833, my son, John, and I started west to enter land. On May 6 we entered two quarters in Putnam County This is the land where we now live. On August 29 we left Green Township and arrived safely September 10, 1833, with our family and goods⁴⁸

One of the emigrants of 1852 has written the following concerning their trip from the Jura Mountains to America:

In the summer and fall of 1851 the fever to migrate became very strong in the Anabaptist churches of Sonnenberg, Münsterberg, and Kleintal in the Jura . . . crop failures, high rents and stricter laws on military service were the chief factors in this migration

Mr. Daniel Steinmann from the Central Bureau for Swiss Emigration in Basel aided in getting passage to America The cost of the trip was 190 francs (\$300).

⁴⁷ *History of Sonnenberg Church*, 1.

⁴⁸ Michael Neuenschwander, *Diary*.

On March 8 we left our homes. The weather was nice but cold The next day we arrived at Basel. . . . From Basel to Strasbourg the trip was made by train. Here we had all our baggage examined. To Saarb-urg we also traveled by train. From here to Commercy we traveled by stagecoach. We arrived at Havre by way of Paris and Rouen.

On Friday, March 19, we boarded the ship *Hanneman* from Norfolk, Virginia. It was 123 feet long, 22 feet wide and could carry 800 tons. It carried no cargo except food, drinking water, fuel, and ballast of stones, besides 175 persons including children. Berths and accommodations were poor Many were seasick; some for a short time and others for the entire trip

On April 27 at three o'clock in the afternoon we saw land in the northwest. It was the small Block Island. That evening a pilot came on board. The next morning a steamer towed us into port We boarded the large steamer *Henry Hudson* the next day and went to Albany . . . and then to Buffalo.

The next Wednesday (after being in Buffalo for two days) we boarded a steamer to Cleveland. I believe that this was the most dangerous part of our journey. Lake Erie was frozen over and the ice had to be broken before the boat could get through. . . . We arrived in Cleveland on May 6 and left for Massillon the same day. Several went on to announce our arrival to the Sonnenbergers who came the next morning with wagons to get us. The trip took exactly two months.⁴⁹

Conclusion

By the end of the fourth decade of the nineteenth century settlements had been established in each of the four Bernese Anabaptist communities that received emigrants directly from Europe. These were the Sonnenberg (1817) and Chippewa (1825) settlements in Wayne County, Ohio; and the Putnam County, Ohio (1833), settlement, and the Adams County, Indiana (1838), settlement. From that time on new settlements were made from the overflow of the older settlements rather than directly from Europe. These followed closely the westward movement of the frontier until in the 1870's when settlements were made in Oregon.

⁴⁹ Zurflüh, *op. cit.*, 32-37.

VII

Bernese Anabaptist Settlements in America

The Ohio and Indiana Setting

One of the reasons why the Wayne County, Ohio, location appealed to these settlers was because the hilly terrain reminded them of their former Swiss homeland. But unlike their Jura Mountains the land here was very fertile. Wayne County ranks today as one of the most productive agricultural counties in the United States.

The Putnam County settlement is located on the southern edge of the Black Swamp. This was the last section of Ohio to be settled. All of this land had to be drained. This entailed much hard labor. The higher land, which is less fertile, was settled first while the best low land was the last to be purchased from the government.

Adams and Wells counties, Indiana, also afforded good land for these people to ply their trade of farming.

When the first settlers came there existed fairly good trails to Pittsburgh. Beyond this point they got progressively worse. They were passable to Wayne County but beyond one had to seek out Indian trails, or, with the aid of an ax, make one. The canals early afforded a good means of transportation from north to south in Ohio. But this was a very roundabout way to go from east to west. When the railroad was built from Wooster to Lima in 1853, the day of pioneer travel came to an end. The railroad from Lima, Ohio, to Decatur, Indiana, which was built in 1883 afforded closer contact with the settlement at Berne, Indiana.

At the time Bendicht Schrag arrived in Wayne County the countryside was almost a complete wilderness. It was only sparsely settled by frontiersmen. In 1807, only ten years before he arrived in Wayne County, it was surveyed into ranges and townships. The first settlers in Sugar Creek Township were John Kenney and John Goudy who arrived in 1809, three years before it was organized.¹

Putnam County was surveyed in 1820 from Indian territory, but was not organized as a separate county until 1834.² When

¹ Henry Howe, *Historical Collections of Ohio* (Cincinnati, 1904), II, 830 ff.

² *Ibid.*, 464.

Michael Neuenschwander moved to Putnam County in 1833 his nearest neighbors lived two miles to the west. They were the Thomas Gray family who had moved there the previous year. In 1848 the territory included in Putnam and Allen counties was reorganized. Richland Township, as well as the most southern one-mile tier of sections in Riley Township, was transferred to Allen County. From then on the Swiss Mennonite settlement was located in two counties. However, by most Mennonites it was called the "Putnam settlement."³ Bluffton and Pandora are the towns of their settlement.

Bendicht Schrag was not the first of his faith to settle in the eastern part of Ohio but rather the first of the Bernese Anabaptist migration. As early as 1803 Amish from Pennsylvania prospected for a location in Ohio. Several of the patent deeds secured by them are dated as early as 1807. In 1809 several Amish families from Somerset County, Pennsylvania, settled in Walnut Creek Township, Holmes County, Ohio, being attracted there by the cheap lands, good springs, and large timber. Among the first settlers were Jonas Miller, Jacob and Joseph Mast, Charles Yoder, and Jacob Stutzman. In 1815 they erected a cabin for a schoolhouse on the Stutzman farm. This settlement was expanded into one of the largest Amish communities.⁴

In 1817, the same year that Bendicht Schrag came to Wayne County, a member of the Amish group in Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, named John Zook, brought his family to the same community in Greene Township. The Oak Grove Amish Mennonite congregation was an outgrowth of this migration. The greater share of this group did not come from Pennsylvania but direct from the Amish settlements in Alsace.⁵

In 1831 John Stemen and Michael Ridenour from the Mennonite settlement in Fairfield County, Ohio, settled in Allen County near the present town of Elida. Others came later from the same location until by 1841 a fair-sized community of Mennonites lived there.⁶ This location is about twenty miles from where Michael

³ E. J. Hirschler, *Centenary History of the Swiss Mennonite Churches of Putnam and Allen Counties, Ohio* (Bluffton, 1937), 5.

⁴ Jonas S. Hartzler and Daniel Kauffman, *Mennonite Church History* (Scottsdale, 1905), 257-58.

⁵ John Umble, *Ohio Mennonite Sunday Schools* (Goshen, 1941), 212.

⁶ John Umble, "The Allen County, Ohio, Mennonite Settlement," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, VI, 2 (April, 1932), 84.

Neuenschwander settled in Putnam County. What connection or contact he had with these people is not known.

The Bernese Anabaptists who settled in Adams and Wells counties, Indiana, in 1838, namely, Christian and Peter Baumgartner, were pioneers of their denomination in that state. Not until 1843 did other Mennonites besides the Swiss settle in Indiana. At this time John Smith from Medina County, Ohio, settled in Elkhart County, Indiana.⁷

In the foregoing a history of the Bernese Anabaptist migration from 1816 until 1875 to the various settlements has been narrated in a general way. The purpose of the following is to give a history of the various settlements as such, with particular references to the history following the founding of each settlement.

Sonnenberg Settlement

As has been related, Bendicht Schrag settled in Green Township, Wayne County, Ohio, in 1817, and wrote a descriptive letter to his brethren in the Jura which helped them to decide to leave their homeland for this community. In 1819 four families came to join him starting what is now called the Sonnenberg settlement. In 1812 when the first minister, John Lehmann, arrived the church was organized. In 1822 Michael Gerber came and became their first deacon. More letters went back to their friends in Switzerland telling about the good land and many opportunities. This encouraged them to join the settlement in Wayne County. By 1834 when the first meetinghouse was built there were about forty families.⁸ Before this they held their worship in private homes. This church was a log building about thirty feet square. It was also used for a schoolhouse. A second somewhat larger building was built in 1861. By 1875 the number grew to 98 families and 258 members.⁹

Events moved quite peaceably in the church until about the time of the Civil War when the question arose concerning how much support they should give the war effort.

The Wadsworth Institute which was opened in 1868 by a

⁷ *Minutes of the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference*, 7. (Scottsdale, 1927).

⁸ S. F. Pannabecker, "The Nineteenth Century Swiss Mennonite Immigrants . . .," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XXI, 2 (April, 1947), 73.

⁹ Ben Douglass, *History of Wayne County, Ohio* (Indianapolis, 1878), 849.

group of liberal-minded Mennonites of Prussia and Eastern Pennsylvania stock had its effect on the Sonnenberg settlement some twenty miles away. Few students were drawn from their group, but fear arose that the Institute was conducive to pride and not simplicity and the nonresistant faith. There was much objection to the use of high German and the stylish manner of dress of the students who came to visit. In 1870 members were forbidden to attend the Wadsworth Institute. In spite of this ruling several young men continued to attend. In 1872 this younger group, led by David Moser, started a Sunday school. In 1877 a missionary society was organized. Samuel F. Sprunger and Carl J. van der Smisen, who had been connected with the Wadsworth Institute, held evening prayer meetings which were not looked upon by the church as a good innovation.¹⁰

On May 19, 1886, a group of members of the Sonnenberg congregation who favored these changes met and decided to form a new congregation. There were eighteen charter members. Six more were added by baptism. By the end of the year they had a church building erected and a membership of forty. The progressive ideas, library, missions, Sunday school, and prayer meetings were continued and enlarged. This church was named the Salem Mennonite Church. The building is located about one-half mile from the mother church.¹¹ The year following its organization it joined the General Conference Mennonite Church, which contained the more liberal-minded Mennonite churches in the United States.

Shortly after this Bishop Christian Sommer called a meeting of the ministers of the Sonnenberg Church since many of their members were attending the Sunday school of the newly formed Salem Church. They decided to organize a Sunday school at Sonnenberg and appointed Minister Jacob Nussbaum as superintendent.

In 1936 about two thirds of the church broke away to form a new congregation which is called the Kidron Mennonite Church as it is located near the village of Kidron in Wayne County. With aid from the Ohio Conference this group withdrew and formed an organization which was supplied with ministerial aid from that

¹⁰ *History of the Salem Mennonite Church*, pp. 2-3. A typewritten copy is in the Bluffton College Mennonite Historical Library.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 90-91.

conference. They held meetings in a tabernacle in Kidron while a church was built. The following year they started services in their new church.¹²

In the Spring of 1952 differences arose within the ministry of the Sonnenberg church. This resulted in the silencing of the two ministers, Jacob Neuenschwander and Lester D. Amstutz, by the bishop, Louis Amstutz. The two ministers organized a group of twenty sympathizing families from the congregation who at present worship in a schoolhouse south of Kidron. At this time the mother Sonnenberg congregation finally joined the Virginia (old) Mennonite conference.

Within the past fifteen years a church belonging to the Christian and Missionary alliance which is located in the Sonnenberg vicinity has drawn largely upon the Sonnenberg Church for its members.

Chippewa Settlement

Benedicht Schrag who is considered the first settler of the Sonnenberg settlement might just as well be called the first settler of the Chippewa settlement since it was about midway between the two that he located. In 1823 Michael Neuenschwander located in this settlement, being one of the earliest settlers there. In 1825 when the Bernese Anabaptists from Normanvillars came they located in Green Township which is about fifteen miles from where their Jura brethren had earlier started the Sonnenberg settlement. Some moved on land which Jacob Schrag purchased from the government in 1824. Others located in Milton Township. It was in 1825 that they organized a congregation, this being the time when Bishop Daniel Steiner joined the group. Peter Steiner was the first minister here and Ulrich Amstutz the first deacon.

This community and the Putnam County settlement were the two places that attracted the greatest share of the brethren from the Normanvillars community. Soon a number of families were there with the names of Steiner, Luginbühl, Bösiger, Neuenschwander, Dühler, Suter, Burkhalter, and Amstutz. Meetings were held

¹² John Umble, *Ohio Mennonite Sunday Schools*, (Goshen, 1941), 246-69.

in the homes of members until a small brick church was built in 1850 on the Christian Steiner farm, one-half mile north and one-half mile west of the present Crown Hill Church. It was called the Amstutz Church by some and the Steiner Church by others, these being the two families who were most numerous and contributed most to the leadership of the church. In 1883 a new church was built on Crown Hill on land donated by D. C. Amstutz. After that it was officially called the Crown Hill Mennonite Church.¹³

In about 1865 a Christian Apostolic (Neutäufer) congregation was formed which drew members from the Swiss Mennonites. They erected a church only one-half mile away from Crown Hill.

A number of the young people began attending the Methodist Sunday school near the Chippewa settlement in the 1870's. As a result of this a Sunday school was organized in their own church in 1874.¹⁴ The church progressed on more liberal lines until 1890 when the trend toward more modern modes of dress was stopped by the ministers. At this time a number of the young people joined other churches in the vicinity.¹⁵

In 1906 there were only fifty members.¹⁶ The church has slowly built up its membership until today it has one hundred and fifty members.¹⁷ It is no longer exclusively a Bernese Anabaptist church, for a number of Mennonites of Pennsylvania background have moved into the neighborhood during the past thirty years. Until 1928 the congregation remained independent of all church conference affiliations. They then joined the Ohio Mennonite and Eastern Amish Mennonite Conference.¹⁸

A storm destroyed the church building in 1936. It was rebuilt into an up-to-date, well-equipped Mennonite church during the following year.¹⁹

In 1897 Bishop D. C. Amstutz willed his farm to the church with the provision that an old people's home be built on it. As a

¹³ *Ibid.*, 246-47. Orpha Mae Zimmerly, "Crown Hill Church, near Marshallville, Ohio," *Christian Monitor*, Sept., 1932.

¹⁴ Zimmerly, *op. cit.*

¹⁵ Pannabecker, *op. cit.*, 94.

¹⁶ *Mennonite Yearbook and Directory*, 1906.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1949.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1928.

¹⁹ Umble, *op. cit.*, 255.

result, the first Mennonite old people's home was erected there and was dedicated in May, 1901. Daniel Amstutz, a brother of Bishop Amstutz, became the first superintendent.^{19a}

Waterloo County, Ontario Settlement

Deacon Christian Bösiger located in Wilmot Township, Waterloo County, Ontario, in 1825, coming from the Normanvillars settlement but more recently from Pennsylvania. Likely he followed the general migration of Mennonites from Pennsylvania to Ontario which was particularly strong during these years. At about the same time Ulrich and Daniel Geiger, brothers, and Ulrich Steiner came. This was the nucleus for another Bernese Anabaptist settlement in America. However, an incident happened in 1835 which caused a change in the history of this group. At that time several Geiger brothers and sisters, several brothers and sisters of Ulrich Steiner, and several Luginbühl brothers and sisters planned to leave their Normanvillars and Jura homes for this settlement in Canada. Shortly before they left they received a letter from Michael Neuenchwander describing conditions in the settlement he had just founded in Putnam County, Ohio. As a result the entire migration was directed there instead.²⁰

In 1836 Christian Bösiger moved to Putnam County with several of his children, leaving only three of his daughters who were married, the two Geiger brothers and Ulrich Steiner and his family in the Waterloo County settlement. The exact date of the founding of their church is not known. However, it must have been in the early 1830's since Ulrich Geiger was ordained deacon in 1831. He became minister in 1838. The church building was erected on the farm of his brother, Daniel Geiger, and has since been called the Geiger Church. It was not organized as a separate Swiss church. It drew quite heavily on the surrounding Mennonites of Pennsylvania descent for its membership. The first building was erected in 1844. The second one was of frame construction and was built in 1876. The present building was remodeled in 1913.²¹

^{19a} Daniel Kauffman, ed. *Mennonite Cyclopedic Dictionary* (Scottsdale, 1936), 275.

²⁰ Information received during an interview with Peter Geiger, Bluffton, Ohio,

²¹ L. J. Burkholder, *op. cit.*, 79.
1940.

Holmes County, Ohio, Settlement

The Holmes County, Ohio, group might well be called an extension of the Sonnenberg settlement. It was founded in 1824 by the Luginbühl, Bichsel, and Thut families who had come here by way of the Rockingham County, Virginia, Mennonite settlement. So far as is known they were members of the Sonnenberg Church. However, it is not out of the way to imagine that they at least occasionally held their own services under the guidance of Peter Thut, who had been ordained a minister in the Jura district. John, a son of the elder Peter Thut, married Christina Bechtel who was from Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, and a member of the American Mennonite church. Through her influence he joined the Longenecker Church which was located near their settlement. He was ordained as a minister of that church in 1843.

In 1836 the Dühler and Luginbühl families moved from Holmes to Putnam County. In the following decade all the other families made the same move. The John Thut family was the last to leave, in 1848. Thut had planned to go to Elkhart County, Indiana, but was so impressed by the Putnam County settlement where his brother, Peter, had settled that he located near him on the banks of the Riley Creek.²²

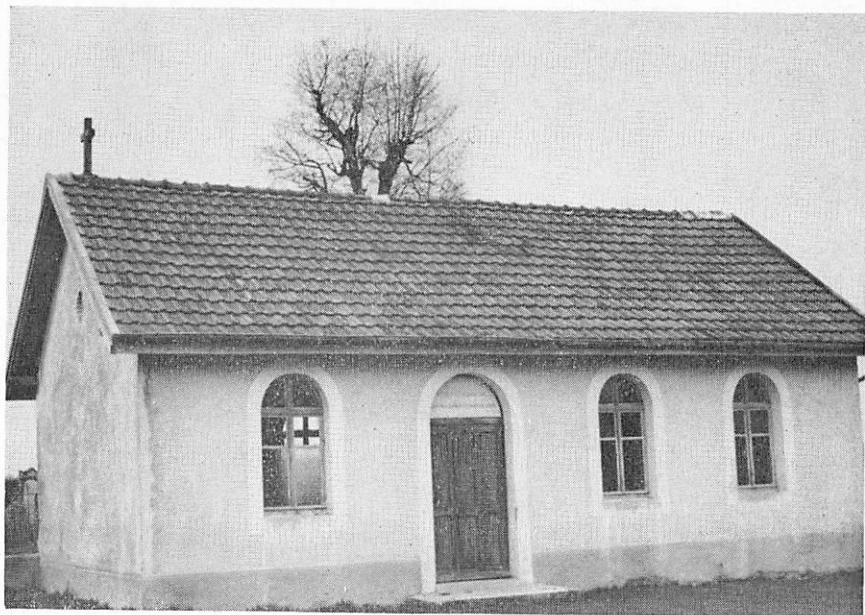
Putnam County, Ohio, Settlement

In the spring of 1833 Michael Neuenschwander and his son John, who had come from Alsace some ten years before, made a trip to the west in search of good government land. They found a suitable location in Putnam County, Ohio, and on May 6, 1833, they went to the land office at Wapakoneta, Ohio, where they entered two quarter sections. They returned to Wayne County and sold their home to a newly arrived family from Normanvillars, the Zimmerlys. In September, 1833, the entire family of Neuenschwanders, including the parents and two sons, arrived at their new home. They erected the first log cabin near a spring.²³

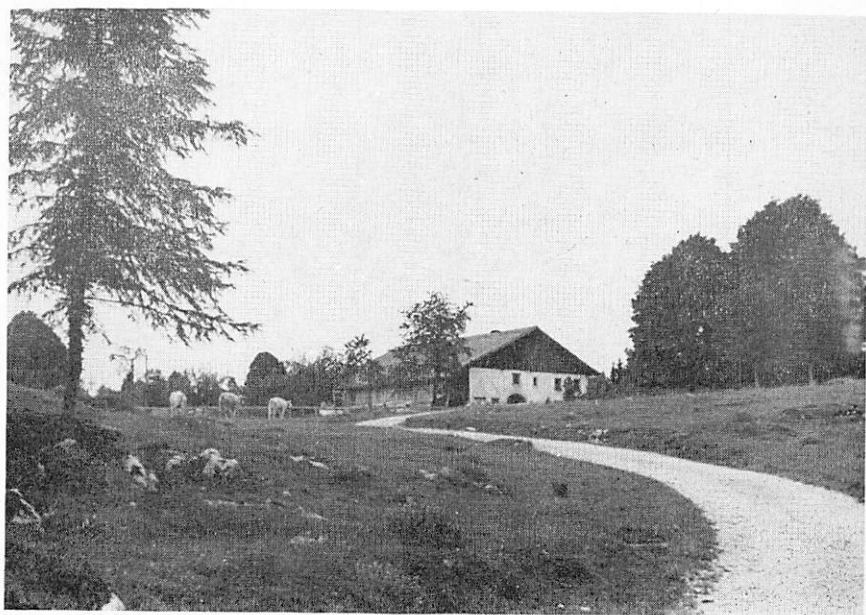
About a year later Christian Suter, Christian Bucher, John Moser, and Ursus Amstutz arrived from Wayne County. Through

²² Reuben Thut, *Biography and History of Bishop John Thut*, 2-4.

²³ Michael Neuenschwander, *Diary*.



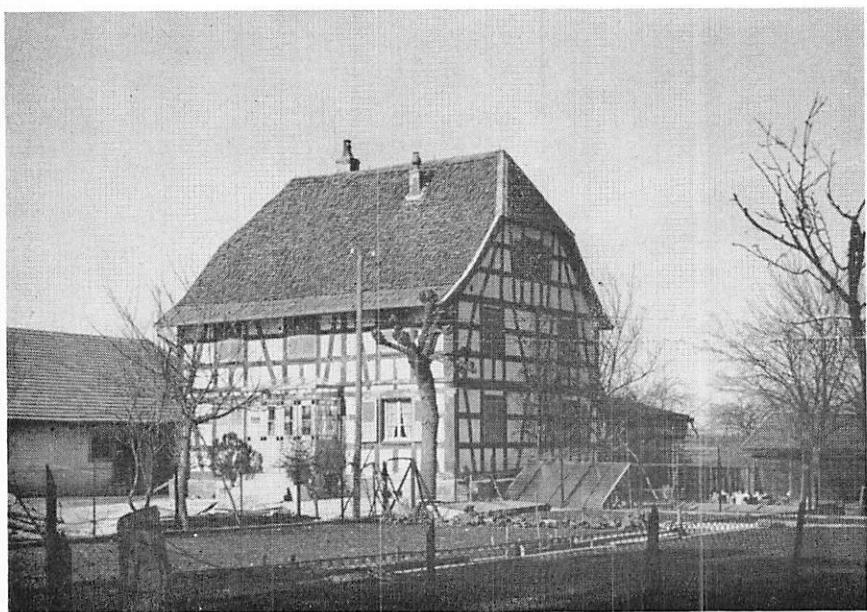
Chapelle des Fermes, Normanvillars. Mennonite meetinghouse. First church erected here in 1849, after most of the Mennonites left this area.



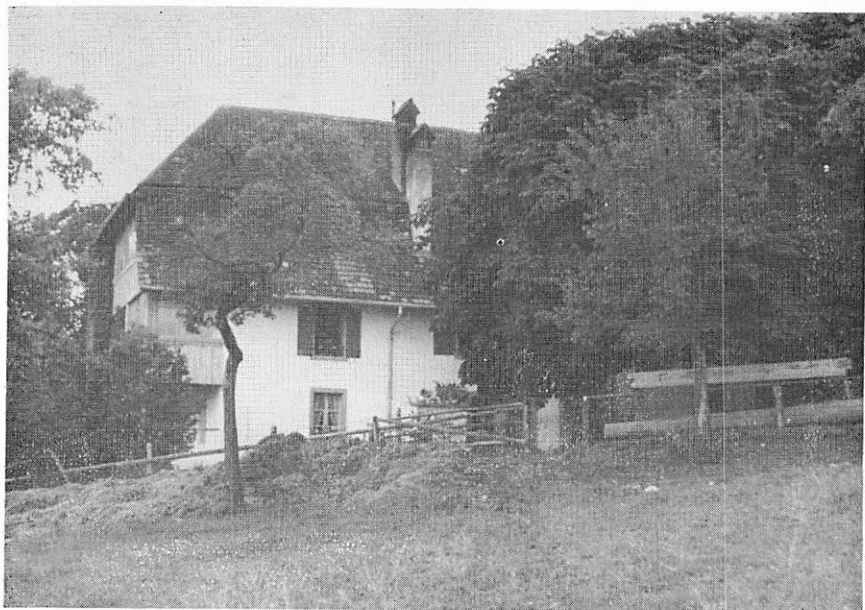
Jeanbrenin and surroundings, a typical Jura scene.



Typical Jura house-barn located at Moron.



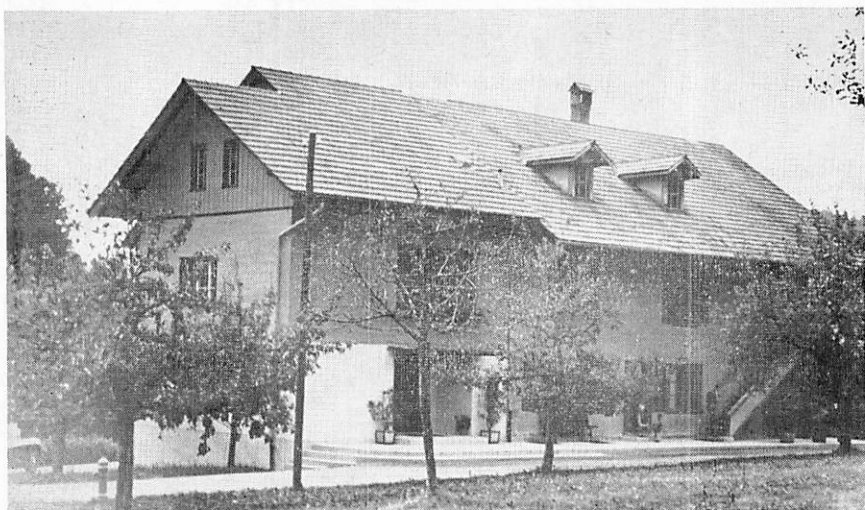
Maison Rouge in Normanvillars, home of the Kaufman family, later home of Elder Daniel Steiner (1749-1811).



Maison Blanche near Leubringen, former home of Bendicht Wahli
(Täufer Bänz).



La Norappe, Commune Réchésy. Home of a Bösingher family.



Kehr meetinghouse near Langnau.



(From "Roesehgarte," by the artist Rudolf Muenger, Bern)
The last moments of martyr Hans Haslibacher.

**Etliche schöne
Christliche Gesen z/ wie sie
in der Gefengniß zu Passaw im
Schloß von den Schweizer Brüdern
durch Gottes gnad gericht und gesun-
gen worden.**

Psalm. 138.

Die Stolgen haben mir strick gelegt/das garn haben
sie mir mit seilen auffgespannen / vnd da ich gehen soltz
haben sie mir Fellen zugerüflet / Darumb sprich ich zum
HERRN: Du bist mein Gott / etc.

M. D. LXIIL

Title page, earliest known European edition of the *Ausbund*.

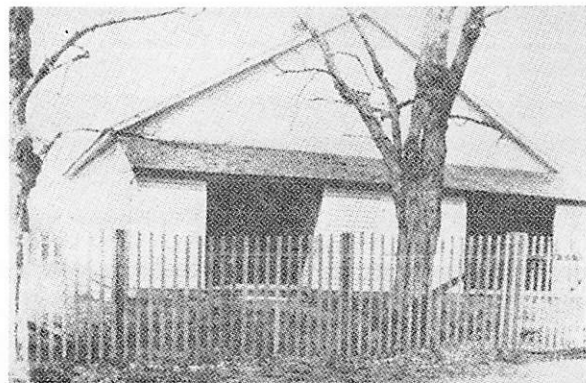


Courtesy *Mennonite Life*.

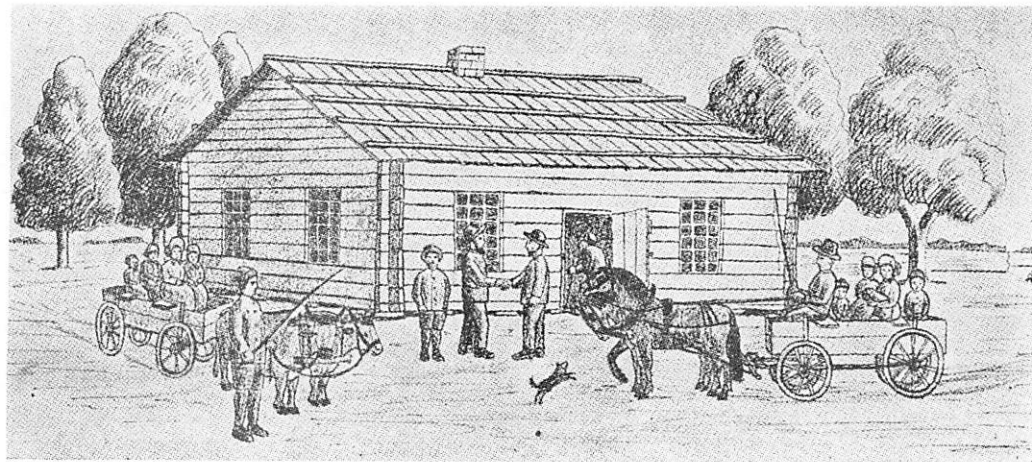
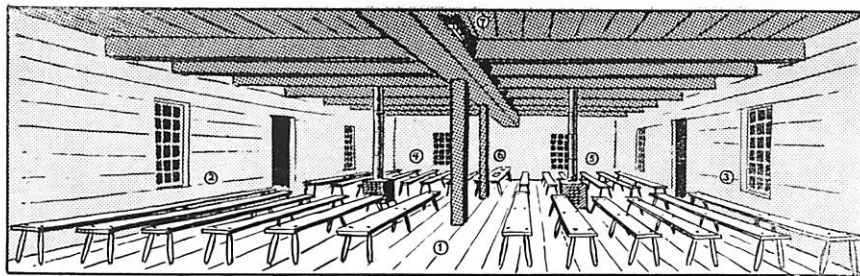
Anabaptist school in session at Les Mottes near La Paturatte.



Home of the Schumacher family in Basel, Switzerland.



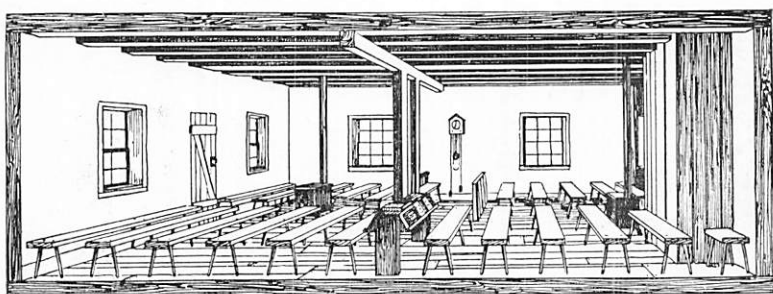
First and second church buildings at Sonnenberg, Wayne County, Ohio.



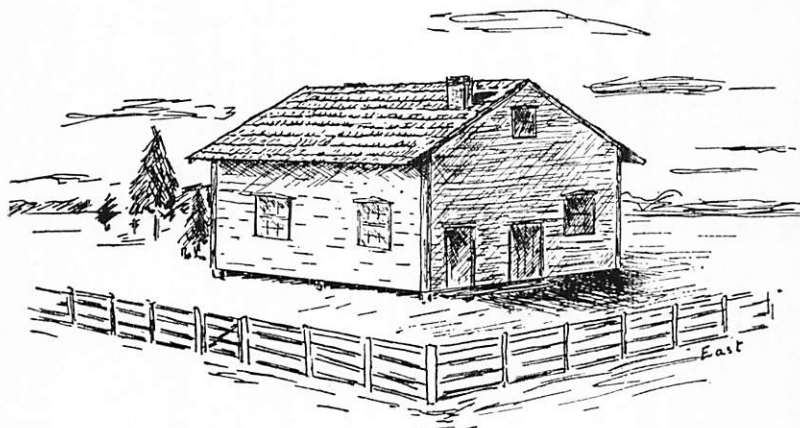
Interior and exterior of first Mennonite church building in the Putnam County settlement.



Rev. Samuel F. Sprunger (1850-1923).



Drawing by Arthur L. Sprunger.



Interior and exterior of first meetinghouse at Berne, Indiana, built in 1856.

a letter describing the country in appealing terms Neuenschwander convinced several families from Normanvillars and the Jura to come here in 1835. With this group came Bishop Christian Steiner who organized the church soon after his arrival. Christian Bösiger, who had just come from Waterloo County, Ontario, was the first deacon of the group. During the first few years services were held in houses, barns, and on nice days under the arms of some protecting tree. In 1840 the first log church was erected two miles north and two miles west of the present village of Bluffton. This was also used for school purposes, and in 1857 was enlarged and changed into a frame building. It was again enlarged in 1876. In 1846 another church building was built just across the road from the present Ebenezer Church, two miles west of Bluffton. Then services were held two successive Sundays at the northern church and the following Sunday at the southern church. Later services were held at each church every other Sunday.²⁴

By the end of 1837 there were already twenty-five families in this new settlement.²⁵ In 1840, when the first census was taken of this area, there was a total of forty-eight families including some two hundred and forty members of the Putnam County settlement.²⁶

In 1853 the community was visited by a typhoid epidemic which claimed some thirty victims from their ranks.²⁷ Among the victims was Ulrich Steiner who had recently been chosen as their bishop to replace Christian Steiner who had passed away in 1846. As a result Christian Suter was chosen as bishop.²⁸

As early as 1844 the Reformed Mennonite Church found entrance into this Swiss Mennonite community. This was a group that effected a reformation of the Pennsylvania Mennonites in favor of a stricter observance of the *Dordrecht Confession of Faith* in matters of shunning, the ban, etc. Locally they were referred to as *Neu Menist* and New Mennonites. Through Christian Rupp, a Pennsylvania Mennonite who had been a member of the Swiss church for a while, and also through the relatives of the Geiger family in Lucas and Fulton counties, Ohio, who had joined the Reformed Mennonite

²⁴ Peter D. Amstutz, *Miscellaneous Incidents*.

²⁵ Peter D. Amstutz, *First Settlers*.

²⁶ From the 1840 census lists of Putnam County, Ohio.

²⁷ John Amstutz, *Death Book of the Beginning of the Swiss Mennonite Settlement*.

²⁸ Chr. Suter, et al. *Church Book of the Mennonite Church in Putnam County, Ohio*.

Church there some years before, several families withdrew from the Swiss church. However, they did not become organized until about twenty years later. Their meetings were held in the various homes. A good share of them were held in the home of the first settler, Michael Neuenschwander, whose son Michael belonged to this group. In 1876 they built a church about three miles northwest of Bluffton on a plot of ground given by the Neuenschwander family. They have at present about fifty members including several Steiner, Neuenschwander, Bösiger, and Nussbaum families. They adhere to the older forms of worship and attire. The meetings are now conducted in English. The singing is one part and unaccompanied as was the case in the early Swiss church.²⁹

In 1846 John Thut arrived from Holmes County, Ohio. The Swiss Mennonite ministers shared the pulpit with him. When the time came for communion he wished to observe the ordinance of feet washing in connection with it. The group as a whole considered this as unnecessary. In an entirely friendly spirit Thut withdrew from them and organized his sympathizers into a separate congregation. They held services in their homes until 1862 when a church was built about three miles west of Bluffton. It was called the Thut Church for many years but officially named the Riley Creek Mennonite Church. Many years later it was renamed the Zion Mennonite Church. It became affiliated with the Ohio Conference Mennonites.³⁰

In 1857 John Thut was ordained bishop by Bishop John M. Brenneman of the Mennonite church at Elida, Ohio. After his ordination as bishop he spent much time traveling in the interest of the Ohio Mennonite Conference and became a very prominent leader of that group. It was a great blow to his congregation and also the conference when he died in 1867. After his death came many difficulties for the church he had founded. It was very difficult for many of the members and some of the ministers to take on customs of the Ohio Conference after they had been raised in the traditional Bernese Anabaptist ways. In later years a vigorous leader arose in the person of minister M. S. Steiner, who unfortunately died in the prime of his life in 1911.

²⁹ Hirschler, *op. cit.* 16.

³⁰ Thut, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

In 1884 one of their two ministers, Abraham Steiner—through the influence of Henry Egly, a former minister of the Old Order Amish near Berne, Indiana, who had left that church because he believed in a greater emphasis on individual conversion and organized the Defenseless Mennonite Church—led about half of the Zion Mennonite Church membership to form a new congregation. They held meetings for several weeks with the aid of Henry Egly and Daniel Rupp of Archbold, Ohio. A deacon, David Bösiger, also joined this group but in later years left it to become a follower of J. A. Dowie. In 1886 the Defenseless Mennonites built a church on the Bösiger farm. This church was moved to Bluffton in 1939 and is still used by the Defenseless Mennonites, more commonly called Egly Mennonites, now officially called Evangelical Mennonites.⁸¹

A division occurred in the Defenseless Mennonite Church when a group of their members together with an equal number from the Swiss Reformed Church of the community formed a congregation in the 1890's which was called the Alliance Church. They left their respective groups because they believed more stress should be put on the points of regeneration and sanctification. They erected a building about 1915 in the town of Pandora, Ohio, where they have about 100 members. They have joined the Missionary Church Association which has its headquarters in Fort Wayne, Indiana. In the 1930's another church was started in Bluffton with the same conference affiliations. It has drawn members from the various Mennonite churches in the community as well as the Methodist Church. This church has a membership of about fifty.⁸²

After the Defenseless Mennonites organized their congregation only twenty members remained in the Riley Creek Church. They progressed with much difficulty during this time. The strict discipline of the Ohio Conference of Mennonites also tended to hinder a growth in membership. For a time it seemed that it would regain its former foothold as some of the children again attended. New ministers were chosen and able assistance was given by ministers of the Ohio Conference. In the 1920's (and before) a number of the younger leaders of the church left the community to become leaders in other Mennonite churches of the Ohio Conference.

⁸¹ *Brief History of the Defenseless Mennonite Church of Bluffton, Ohio.*

⁸² Interviews with members of the community.

By 1925 the congregation disbanded and nearly all the members joined other Mennonite churches in the settlement.³³

Though all these divisions occurred in the Swiss Mennonite congregations of the community only a relatively small per cent were drawn away from the original congregation. It continued to grow quite rapidly. By 1890 there were over 500 members.³⁴ In 1896 there were 900 members.³⁵

The Mennonite Institute at Wadsworth, Ohio, drew support from this community as well as the Sonnenberg and Berne communities. Contributions to missions and education were occasionally made. Some subscribed to the General Conference paper, the *Christlicher Bundesbote*, which started in 1882. The General Conference was invited to meet at the northern Swiss church, now called the St. John's Church, in 1893. At this time they officially joined the General Conference.³⁶

Not all favored this conference affiliation. A few families led by Bishop Christian Zimmerly withdrew and established an independent congregation which met in the Church of Christ in Pandora, Ohio. When Zimmerly died, Jacob Haas became the leader and minister of the group. They were called the Zimmerly Church and later the Haas Church after their leaders. More officially they were named the Defenseless Swiss Church. They were connected with no conference. In 1925 the organization disbanded and most of the members transferred their membership to the St. John's Mennonite Church near Pandora.³⁷

With the Wadsworth Institute and the General Conference influence came a definitely liberalizing effect on the Swiss churches here. Ministers were drawn from outside their own group to lead them. One was an Evangelical. Two others during this period were of liberal South-German stock. Within a few decades (1880-1900) practically all distinctive Mennonite doctrines were lost by the group. Plain dress was the first to be dropped. Later nonresistance practically died out.

³³ John Umble, "Zion (Bluffton) Congregation," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, V, 3 (July 1931), 179-97.

³⁴ Hirschler, *op. cit.*, 20.

³⁵ H. P. Krehbiel, *History of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America* (St. Louis, 1898). 398.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 388-90.

³⁷ Hirschler, *op. cit.*, 29.

In 1905 a church building was erected in Pandora and named the Grace Mennonite Church. It organized independently from the other three churches. In Bluffton the First Mennonite Church was built in 1906 for those living in and near Bluffton, Ohio. The Ebenezer Mennonite Church, First Mennonite Church, and St. John's Mennonite Church were served by the same ministers and under the same bishop until about 1920 when they organized separately. At the present time these three churches and the Grace Mennonite Church belong to the General Conference Mennonite Church. They represent a membership of 1,721.³⁸

Partly as a home mission project and partly as an effort to organize the Swiss Mennonites who had moved to near-by Lima, Ohio, into a congregation, the First Mennonite Church of Lima, Ohio, was founded. This was started in the early 1930's with aid from the Swiss churches in the Allen and Putnam County community.

Baumgartner Settlement, Indiana

On September 15, 1838, Christian Baumgartner and his bride settled near Vera Cruz, Wells County, Indiana. With them came his brother Peter. In August of the following year their father, David Baumgartner, who was a minister, together with several other families, joined them. Under the guidance of David Baumgartner meetings were held in the various homes. Later a school-house was used where they held meetings every third Sunday. By 1849 there were sixteen families who belonged to this new settlement. Most of these people had come from the Jura region quite directly, although some had lived in the Sonnenberg community.³⁹

In March, 1852, a number of Bernese Anabaptists from the Emmental region located near Vera Cruz and joined the Baumgartner group. Among them were two ministers, Ulrich Kipfer and Matthias Strahm. In the same year the aged leader, David Baumgartner, passed away.

Because of the lack of leadership during this period several divisions occurred. The Evangelicals who came into the community about 1853 drew heavily from their group. One of the leaders

³⁸ *Handbook of Information. The General Conference Mennonite Church, 1952.*

³⁹ Sprunger, *op. cit.*, 4.

of the Baumgartner Church, Matthias Strahm, and a number of families left the congregation and organized the Christian Apostolic Church, locally called New Manist.⁴⁰ This took place in about 1858.

Rev. Ulrich Kipfer was left alone to serve until Christian Augsburg was elected to the ministry in 1865. The following year Kipfer died and Christian Baumgartner was elected as elder to succeed him. Disappointed that he did not obtain the eldership, Christian Augsburg, with three other families, withdrew from the church in 1869 to form the so-called Old Mennonite Church which met in the Schlatter schoolhouse for worship.

In 1860 Peter Baumgartner donated a plot of ground for a church building for the Baumgartner congregation. This church was built by the members in the same year.

In 1868 Samuel F. Sprunger was chosen as minister of the Münsterberg Church and for a time was responsible for the Baumgartner Church too. He would preach at each place every other Sunday. Meetings were continued in the Baumgartner Church until 1887 when they joined with the Münsterberg group in the building of a large church in the town of Berne.⁴¹

Münsterberg Settlement, Berne

Closely connected with the history of the Baumgartner settlement is the group of eighty-two Bernese Anabaptists who came from the Jura in 1852, to Adams County, Indiana, and settled where the town of Berne is now located. Peter S. Lehmann, who had been ordained as minister several years before in Switzerland, was the leader of the group. In 1856 Christian Sprunger was elected minister to aid him. They met in homes at first but soon the group was entirely too large for any of their houses. They built a church in 1858. In 1865 Peter Habegger, a minister from the Jura, arrived and aided in the church work. Lehmann left in 1868 for Elkton, Missouri, where he helped to start a small settlement. Thus it was expedient to choose another minister. They chose a young man not yet twenty years of age named Samuel F. Sprunger.

Sprunger insisted on attending school at the Wadsworth Institute before taking up the work. The church permitted him to do

⁴⁰ This is the same group as the *Neutäufer* in Switzerland.

⁴¹ Sprunger, *op. cit.*, 5-10.

this. Here he learned many new customs and ways of doing things that the older members of the church did not particularly welcome. Through him the liberalizing factors appeared in this settlement about the same time as in the small Salem group in the Sonnenberg community.

As has been mentioned, the Baumgartner Church also asked Sprunger to assist them in their services since they had no leader at the time. In this manner these two congregations soon united. To get the Christian Sprunger group to join was not as easy. The bulk of the church eventually united efforts with him but Peter M. Neuenschwander, a young minister who had recently (1876) come from the Jura region,⁴² and about ten families did not join with the main group. Feeling that the new church they built in 1879 was too stylish and that the leaders were becoming too much like the world in their dress and in their liberal church policy, this group remained independent. They have retained their strictness through the years. The only other group with which they hold fellowship is the Sonnenberg congregation in Wayne County, Ohio. In 1883 Neuenschwander was ordained bishop by Bishop Christian Sommer of the Sonnenberg Church. Until 1943 he preached every other Sunday to a group of about five families.⁴³ The aged bishop passed away in 1946. Most of the members have since drifted to other churches.

The Berne congregation grew rapidly after the three churches combined. The church of 1879 was enlarged and in 1912 a new and much larger building was erected. Today this is the largest Mennonite church in the United States. It has a membership of 1,312.⁴⁴

Samuel F. Sprunger, their minister for fifty years, brought life and a spirit of unity that was never before present in the Berne churches. But with it came many changes that drew the congregation away from much of what was basically Bernese Anabaptist. This change from an extremely conservative church group to one that is but slightly different from any other evangelical denomination took place here about ten years earlier than in the Putnam County congregation. The dates of this change are roughly 1875 to 1890. The influence of the Wadsworth Institute was very direct since Sprunger,

⁴² *Pässe*, SAB. VIII.

⁴³ Interview with Peter M. Neuenschwander, 1945.

⁴⁴ *Handbook of Information. The General Conference Mennonite Church*, 1952.

a student from there, became their minister. He was a dynamic character, loved and highly respected by his congregation. Sprunger retired as minister in 1919. Since then non-Bernese Anabaptists have had the pulpit helping further to break down many of their traditional Mennonite views although not in the least their spirit of unity and enthusiasm for missions, Sunday schools, and the work of the General Conference.⁴⁵

Lucas County, Ohio, Settlement

In 1838 John Moser, his wife, and two of their children moved to near Whitehouse, Lucas County, Ohio. They had come from the Emmental near Langnau to the Putnam County settlement in 1834. Their son John married during their interim at Putnam County and took his bride to the new home in Lucas County. Later other families moved to the same community from the Putnam County settlement. These included representatives of the Geiger, Bösiger, Neuenschwander, and Bucher families.⁴⁶

Quite early the group here became affiliated with the Reformed Mennonite movement. There is at present a small congregation of this affiliation who have a church and cemetery about two miles from Whitehouse and hold meetings every two weeks during the summer. The ministers at the present time are Herbert and Harvey Bucher. Those of this settlement, which was never very large, who retain their membership in the Mennonite church belong here. The membership at present is approximately ten.⁴⁷

Roulet's Amish Congregation

A group of fourteen Amish families of Bernese origin migrated to Butler County, Ohio, in 1867 under the leadership of Philip Roulet. Two years later they moved to Iowa and in 1873 located near Pulaski, Davis County, where there was an Amish settlement.⁴⁸ Roulet had been ordained a minister in Switzerland. He was highly esteemed by his congregation. During his pastorate the distinctive Amish religious practices were dropped in his church.

⁴⁵ Much of the above material is based on Sprunger, *op. cit.*

⁴⁶ Samuel H. Baumgartner, *Welty History, 1728-1926*, 41-45.

⁴⁷ Interview with older members of this church, May, 1945.

⁴⁸ C. Henry Smith, *op. cit.*, 572.

Use of the ban was not practiced, instrumental music in church worship was introduced, feet washing was dropped, and the devotional covering discarded. In 1890 they joined the Middle District Conference and the General Conference Mennonites in 1892.⁴⁹ The present membership is 132.⁵⁰

In the 1890's seven families from the Roulet congregation went to Missouri and then settled near Goodland, Sherman County, located in western Kansas.⁵¹ By 1911 their membership was thirty and they belonged to the General Conference Mennonites.⁵² It has since died out.

Whitewater, Kansas

A group of about ten Mennonite families containing thirty-three persons left the Emmental in canton Bern in 1883 and settled sixteen miles east of Newton, Kansas, near Whitewater, Butler County, on the northern edge of the Emmaus congregation, a Prussian Mennonite settlement. The Swiss worshiped with the Prussians at first but soon formed their own congregation. Several of the family heads were: J. Blaser, Peter Zürcher, and Johann Wüthrich. Other scattered Bernese Mennonite families already located in Kansas and Minnesota as well as a few from the settlements farther east came to this community in the following decade.⁵³

In 1890 they joined the Kansas Conference.⁵⁴ They became affiliated with the General Conference Mennonites in 1893. In 1896 the congregation had fifty members.⁵⁵ The present membership is 132.⁵⁶

Scattered Settlements

The settlements discussed above are the only ones of any size that have been made by settlers coming directly from Bernese and the Normanvillars Anabaptist communities. Individual families

⁴⁹ Melvin Gingerich, *The Mennonites in Iowa* (Iowa City, 1939), 64-66, 289-92. *Mennonite Yearbook and Almanac*, 1905, pp. 35-36.

⁵⁰ *Handbook of Information. The General Conference Mennonite Church*, 1952.

⁵¹ *Abdruck der Gesamt-Protokolle der Kansas- und Westlichen-Distrikt Konferenz der Mennoniten von Nord-Amerika, 1877-1909* (Newton, 1910), 239.

⁵² H. P. Krehbiel, *Mennonite Churches of North America*. (Newton, 1911), 18.

⁵³ J. Blaser, Holden, Kansas, letter of May 20, 1884, to Emmental brethren, *Zionspilger*, III, 9 (Sept., 1884), p. 3; 10 (Oct., 1884), pp. 2-3.

⁵⁴ *Gesamt-Protokolle . . .*, *op. cit.*, 141.

⁵⁵ H. P. Krehbiel, *History of the General Conference of the Mennonites of North America*, chart after p. 398.

⁵⁶ *Handbook of Information*, *op. cit.*

settled in many of the settlements where Mennonites had already located. Several families stayed in Virginia. These were the Sutters and a Bösiger daughter who married a person in Virginia. Peter Bösiger, a son of Christian Bösiger, stayed in Columbiana County, Ohio. His family became one of the leading ones in that settlement of Mennonites. In the Amish communities of Green Township, Wayne County, Ohio, and also in Fulton County, Ohio, members of the Burkhalter family early found their homes. This was a Swiss Mennonite family from the Jura.⁵⁷

Introduction to the Secondary Settlements

The following is a list, together with a brief history of each, of the secondary settlements that were made in the United States by the Bernese Anabaptists during the nineteenth century. None of the above-mentioned settlements was wholly made up of emigrants as can readily be seen. There was much moving and removing from one settlement to another after they were established. The following represent the settlements where none or a very negligible per cent of the settlers came directly from canton Bern.

Polk County, Iowa, Settlement

John B. Neuenschwander, who had come with his parents from the Normanvillars settlement to the Chippewa settlement in Wayne County in 1823 and then with them to become the founders of the Putnam County settlement in 1833, moved again in 1849. This time it was to Madison Township, Polk County, Iowa. With Neuenschwander and his family went Isaac Nussbaum and family who were also from the Putnam County settlement. Peter S. Neuenschwander moved there in the same year. In 1850 the Jacob and John Liechty families settled there. In the following year Christian Neuenschwander came and in 1852 Daniel Neuenschwander bought land there.

In August, 1858, Bishop Christian Suter of Putnam County, Ohio, traveled to Polk County, Iowa, and ordained Joseph Schroeder, a son-in-law of John B. Neuenschwander, to the office of deacon.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Burkholder, *op. cit.*

⁵⁸ Chr. Suter, *et al.* *Church Book of the Mennonite Church in Putnam County, Ohio*, 13.

Schroeder was very talented in his work as minister. However, when it was learned that he was secretly a Catholic he was dismissed from the church. He returned to Des Moines and resumed his former occupation of cigar maker. This was in 1865. During his ministry ten members were added to the church.

In 1863 Christian Suter ordained Peter Neuenschwander to the office of bishop. Because of old age and failing health he resigned this position a few years later. At the same time that Neuenschwander was ordained bishop, John Singer, a cooper living in Polk City, was chosen and ordained minister. In 1868 when both Minister Singer and Deacon John B. Neuenschwander moved to Moniteau County, Missouri, the church was left without leadership and soon passed out of existence. Most of the families moved away. Only the Liechty family remained in the community.

This church never had a building. They met in their homes during the entire existence of the group. They adhered to the traditional simple forms of attire and worship at first but some changes took place toward the latter part of their short history.⁵⁹

The church sent a visitor in the person of Joseph Schroeder to the first meeting of the General Conference Mennonites which was held in 1860 at West Point, Lee County, Iowa.⁶⁰

Paulding County, Ohio, Settlement

Attracted to Paulding County by the vast areas of uncut timber Frederick Geiger of the Putnam County settlement moved to the junction of Flat Rock Creek and the Miami Extension Canal in Auglaize Township where he purchased a tract of land. At this time he was twenty-four years old and single. Two years later he went back to Putnam County and married Elizabeth Hilty. They, together with her parents, John and Catherine (Neuenschwander) Hilty, made their home in Paulding County. Later David and Peter Hilty, brothers of Mrs. Frederick Geiger, came to live there for several years. Franz Kemler, Moses Augsburger, and a family named Bandy moved there from the Putnam County settlement.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Melvin Gingerich, *op. cit.*, 144, 146-48.

⁶⁰ H. P. Krehbiel, *op. cit.*, 49, 65.

⁶¹ Interviews with members of the Geiger and Hilty families who at one time lived in Paulding County.

Bishop John Thut was very interested in this settlement because his daughter, Mrs. David Hilty, lived here and also because most of these settlers were formerly members of his church. On June 13, 1864, Bishop John Thut conducted services at the home of Franz Kemler where he received three into church membership through baptism and observed communion. Through the American Mennonite Church periodical, *Herold der Wahrheit*, Thut appealed on their behalf for a minister to settle there. Bishop John Thut visited this community on at least two other occasions before his untimely death in 1868.

Frederick Geiger seems to have prospered in the lumber business. He bought several wooded plots, cleared them of lumber, and sold the land at a nice profit. He also owned and operated a steam sawmill located on the Miami Extension Canal. Failing to induce a minister to settle here and despairing of founding a Mennonite settlement, he sold his property and returned to his former home in the Putnam County settlement. Others sold their land too and returned. Only one Hilty family, the Kemler family, and part of the Bandy family remained. They were lost to the Mennonite Church in a short time, however.⁶²

Chapel Congregation, Hancock County, Ohio

Another small settlement of Bernese Anabaptists who were very closely allied with Bishop John Thut's Riley Creek Church is the group which is located near the present village of New Stark in Hancock County, Ohio.

As early as 1839 John Friedt (or Freed) and his wife located in this community. He was from Stark County, Ohio, as were most of the other settlers in this neighborhood. In the following year his brothers Paul and Peter and sister Maria Friedt settled here. This family was of Mennonite parentage. All except Peter remained members of this church after they settled here. From nearly the beginning of the Riley Creek Church in 1846 members of the Friedt family made the journey of twelve miles to meet with this group of Mennonites.

⁶² John Umble, "Early Mennonite Sunday Schools of Northwestern Ohio," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, V, 3 (July, 1931), 182-84.

In 1865, after his first wife died, Paul Freed married Catherine, a daughter of Bishop John Thut. He invited her sister and husband, John H. and Mary Ann (Thut) Hilty, to move near them on one of his farms. Soon after this Peter B. Thut, a son, and Mrs. Joel Baumgartner, a daughter, and her husband, together with the old widow of Bishop John Thut, moved to this location near New Stark.

At this time none of the land was drained well enough to raise good crops. It was with great difficulty that these early settlers set up a drainage system so that this fertile ground might be given a chance to produce. Some time later John H. Hilty operated a tile mill in this community which made tile more accessible.

During the early 1870's these families continued to attend meetings at the Riley Creek Church whenever possible. Finally in 1876 a group of fourteen became charter members of the church they organized and named the Chapel congregation. The meeting-house was located west of New Stark. Until 1882 they had no minister. At that time they elected Henry Funk who had recently moved from Perry County, Ohio. He soon moved to Paulding County; so they again were without a minister. In 1883 Jacob Horning, Jr., was ordained minister for their group but he too moved away in a few years. In 1891 John Blosser was ordained and four years later his brother Noah Blosser was also ordained to the ministry. Under them the church developed greatly. John Blosser died in 1921 and Noah died in 1936.

In 1926 the church became involved in some difficulties with the Ohio Conference of which it had been a member since its beginning. The trouble was in regard to the interpretation and application of some conference regulations. The congregation voted to join the General Conference Mennonites in 1927. Since that time several of the churches of the community joined hands and formed what is known as the Federated Church of New Stark. Included in this group is the handful of Mennonites that remain here. They have no resident pastor but usually obtain a General Conference minister or ministerial student from Bluffton College for their services.⁶³

⁶³ John Umble, "The Hancock County Mennonite Settlement near New Stark," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, V, 4 (Oct., 1931), 260-71.

Morgan and Moniteau Counties, Missouri

In October, 1865, Peter P. Lehmann, Sr., Ulrich Welty, and Christian Luginbühl (later changed to Loganbill) of the Sonnenberg settlement in Wayne County, Ohio, composed a delegation to find a suitable location for a colony in the west where the young folks of their community could buy cheap land. These men journeyed west through northern Missouri and southern Iowa to the Kansas state line, returning eastward along the Missouri Pacific Railway viewing many localities. They finally found a suitable area about eight miles south of Tipton on open grass prairie of the Ozark upland. Christian Luginbühl bought a farm here conditionally. The following April he, together with his brother John, Christian Gerber, John Lehmann, and Ulrich Aeschbacher together with their families, left the Sonnenberg community for Missouri, settling near Tipton in Morgan and Moniteau counties, Missouri. In the fall two more families arrived and during the following year seven families came. Two of these were from the Polk County, Iowa, settlement, one from Wayne County, Ohio, two from Kent County, Michigan, one from Putnam County, Ohio, and one from Niagara County, New York. In 1868 practically the entire group that was left in Polk County, Iowa, came here and more also from Wayne County, Ohio.⁶⁴

Though they were without a minister they had meetings every second Sunday in the homes of the various members. They would have Scripture reading, singing, prayer, and sometimes one would read a sermon and give some exhortations on it. This was kept up for three years until a minister moved into their midst.

Ministers from Summerfield, Illinois, visited them and observed communion with them in April, 1867. A Sunday school to "instruct the children in reading, writing, and spelling, to sing with them and to impress the religious truths in their minds" was started.⁶⁵

Into this Bernese community a group of American Mennonites from their various settlements in the East also settled soon after the

⁶⁴ "The Mennonites in Missouri. Bethel Mennonite Church," *Versailles Statesman*, Aug. 2, 1917.

⁶⁵ (Jesse H. Loganbill) *Souvenir Album of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Founding of the Bethel Mennonite Church in Morgan and Moniteau Counties near Fortuna, Missouri*, (Berne, Indiana, 1917), 22.

Bernese opened up this section. In the spring of 1871 this group separated from the Bernese church group and formed what is known as the Mt. Zion Church. This separation took place in all peacefulness.

In August, 1870, the Bethel Church was built. In 1894 it was enlarged. This building was used until 1909 when the present building was built. In 1871 they elected Peter P. Lehmann, Jr., as their minister. He attended the Mennonite Institute at Wadsworth, Ohio. As early as 1881 they affiliated themselves with the General Conference Mennonites sending a delegate to the conference held that year at Halstead, Kansas.⁶⁶ In 1878 Manasseh S. Moyer from Wadsworth, Ohio, was given a call to assist Peter P. Lehmann in his duties.

At various times between 1873 and 1875 Russian Mennonites who had emigrated from that country stopped in this settlement and were given assistance by this church. This was the beginning of their interest in missions.

In 1903 P. P. Lehmann retired from the ministry and Moyer passed away. David D. King from Putnam County became their pastor. He served until 1926 when he resigned.⁶⁷ Since then a number of young men have had charge of ministering to the group.

The change from plain attire took place about the same time that it did in the Putnam County settlement. The dates of transition may quite accurately be placed from 1885 to 1895 though a few of the older women have continued to wear their prayer coverings and black bonnets until recent times. Unlike any of the other Bernese Anabaptist churches that joined the General Conference, they have held to their nonresistant position quite consistently. During the first World War three were drafted from the church but only one did regular military service while the other two did noncombatant duty. Of the nine from this church who were drafted during the past war, eight went to Civilian Public Service camps.⁶⁸ At the present time the church membership is 137.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Krehbiel, *op. cit.*, 378.

⁶⁷ Peter P. Hilty, "History of the Bethel Mennonite Church near Fortuna, Mo., 1867-1942." *Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Bethel Mennonite Church* (California, Mo., 1942), 4-7.

⁶⁸ Correspondence with Peter P. Hilty.

⁶⁹ *Handbook of Information. The General Conference Mennonite Church*, 1952.

Hickory County, Missouri, Settlement

In 1868 another small Bernese Anabaptist settlement in Missouri had its beginning when the minister Peter S. Lehmann from the Berne, Indiana, settlement led several families to Hickory County, Missouri, about fifty miles southwest of the Bethel Mennonite settlement which had its start some three years before. Those joining with his family in this move were a sister of P. S. Lehmann who married a Schneck and their family, Christian Gilliom and his wife who was a daughter of P. S. Lehmann, and other members of the Gilliom relationship who came from Wayne County, Ohio. A Neuenschwander family also located there quite early.⁷⁰

Peter S. Lehmann was their minister. They held services in the various homes every second Sunday. Also a Sunday school was started.⁷¹ There were about fifty church members at the time of its greatest prosperity.⁷² The church was represented at the General Conference sessions held in 1884, 1887, and 1890. Rev. Lehmann was the delegate from this church in 1884 and 1890 while Christian Gerber represented the group in 1887.⁷³

The land was not very good here, especially when compared to the settlements from where they had just come. There were many crop failures. People became discouraged, and one family after another moved away. During the 1880's some left, but the greater share left during the first half of the next decade. Finally through persuasion from friends and relatives at Berne, Indiana, the Lehmanns, who were quite old by now, moved back to their former home in Adams County, Indiana, in 1896. Others moved to Berne, Indiana, and many to the Bethel community in Morgan and Moniteau counties, Missouri. After Peter S. Lehmann left, the church ceased. By 1910 practically none of the group was left. Now there are only several persons who were formerly of this group living here. They married residents of the community who were not Mennonites.⁷⁴

At about the same time that the Bernese Anabaptists settled in Hickory County a group of Amish Mennonites also settled in the

⁷⁰ Eva F. Sprunger, letter of April 24, 1945.

⁷¹ Peter S. Lehman, *Chronik der Familie Lehman*, 15-16.

⁷² Peter P. Hilty, letter of April 16, 1945.

⁷³ Krehbiel, *op. cit.*, 380-88.

⁷⁴ See Note 71.

same community. They too have now left. A part of them at least formed an "Egly-Amish" church (Evangelical Mennonite Conference). This was in existence until about 1923 when it too disbanded.⁷⁵

The Oregon Settlement

The event of the completion of the first transcontinental railway in 1869 opened the far west for settlement in a simpler manner than before when prairie schooners were the mode of transcontinental transportation. The fertile soil selling cheaply in western Oregon beckoned to many who lived in the crowded farm communities in the east.

For the Bernese Anabaptists who arrived in the Sonnenberg settlement in Wayne County, Ohio, during the 1870's it was difficult to purchase land because all had been developed and naturally cost more than they could pay. Few stayed. Most pushed on west where it was more possible for them to make a start in farming. In 1876 the three families of Christian Geiger, Peter Geiser, and Barbara Steffen left the Sonnenberg community and went to Oregon, settling in the districts of Silverton and Salem. The Geiger and Geiser families had left the Bernese Jura only four years earlier. During the following year five single men from near Bluffton, Ohio, went to Oregon to find their fortune. One returned and the others did not join in the Mennonite community. In the following years the following families joined the settlement from the Sonnenberg community in Wayne County, Ohio: John Biery, John Heyerly, John Sutter, John Beer, John Ulrich Beer, David Bögli, Peter and Christian Neuenschwander, John and Nicklaus Liechty. The bishop Christian B. Steiner and family from the Chippewa settlement in Wayne County, Ohio, joined the settlement in 1885. The John Gerber and Peter Herr families came from the Putnam County community. Others came in later years including representatives from the Steiner, Kauffmann, Miller, Christener, Meier, Beutler, Moser, and Welty families.

Upon the arrival of Christian B. Steiner, who had been ordained bishop of the Swiss Mennonite church in the Chippewa settlement, church services were started. They were held in the

⁷⁵ *Mennonite Yearbook and Directory*, 1905, 1923.

homes of the various members. Christian Geiger and later John Beer also served in the ministry of this group. The pattern of worship was similar to that of the Chippewa Church. Black prayer coverings and somber-colored dresses were worn by the women. The men wore hooks and eyes on their clothing instead of buttons and dressed equally conservative. A closely knit church life was difficult as the members lived far apart. The young people became disinterested in joining church because of the strict discipline. In 1929 it disbanded. Some of the members joined the Methodist, Christian, and the Zion Mennonite congregation near Hubbard. But some twenty years before most of them left the old church and became charter members of the Salem Mennonite Church at Salem, Oregon, which soon became affiliated with the General Conference Mennonite Church.⁷⁶

Rossville-Buck Creek, Indiana, Settlement

The first Mennonites to come to this area were the brothers John and Christian Zimmermann who came from Missouri in 1870. John settled near Buck Creek and Christian near Rossville. Both were ministers. They organized the first congregation of Mennonites which from the beginning was affiliated with the "Egley-Amish," now officially called the Evangelical Mennonite Church. Other families moving there in the 1870's and 1880's who were also likely of Amish background were Christian Shonbeck of Adams County, Indiana, Christian Gerber from Illinois, Christian Ehresman from Ohio, Christian Ehresman from Berne, Indiana, Jacob Schrock, Louis Hershey, John Gingerich, and Joseph Wise.

Contributing the greatest number of families to this community was the Allen-Putnam County, Ohio, Swiss Mennonite settlement. Five children and two grandchildren of Ursus Amstutz (1805-59), one of the earliest settlers in the Putnam County settlement, went with their families to the Rossville-Buck Creek, Indiana, settlement during the 1880's. They had joined the Defenseless Mennonite Church (now Evangelical Mennonite Church) before leaving for Indiana. Others from the Putnam County settlement, and members of the Swiss Mennonite congregation who settled there at the same

⁷⁶ Information for this section was gained from letters from the older members of the Salem Mennonite community including Daniel Steiner, Mrs. Jacob Amstutz, and John Heyerly, written during July and August, 1949.

time were: John D. Basinger, Christian Bucher, Christian Suter, and Christian Lehmann. These last-named families did not join the Defenseless Mennonite Church at that place, but for some unknown reason the majority attended the German Reformed Church.

The Mennonites were attracted here by the cheap land and the good springs. The area is made up of two hilly sections and a level section.

The Defenseless Mennonite Church was the only Mennonite church in the area. Until 1890 church services were held in the homes. At that time a meetinghouse was erected near Buck Creek on Christian Shonbeck's farm.⁷⁷ The membership was from thirty to thirty-five between 1906 and 1928.⁷⁸ Besides the Zimmermanns, other ministers were Christian Gerber, Levi Mellinger, Sam Ehresman, John Rediger, and others for shorter periods. In 1944 the last church services were held in the church at Buck Creek. Already in 1941 a Defenseless Mennonite Church was begun in La Fayette some fifteen miles away by Rev. Cantrell. A mission was also started in the same city in 1945 by Stanley Rupp. Most of the families from both Buck Creek and Rossville moved away or died out. Some who remain in this settlement do not attend the La Fayette Church because of distance. The present membership at La Fayette is about 100. Less than one half of them are of Mennonite background.

Preaching was altogether in German until about forty years ago. The women formerly wore black prayer veils and bonnets. These were discarded about 1910.⁷⁹

Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonites of Bernese Origin, and Their Descendants

The Mennonite families in the Palatinate are of Bernese and Zurich origin. There is no evidence that settlements were made in the Palatinate on the basis of regional origin in Switzerland. Neither did they retain either the Bernese or Zurich manner of speech for more than one generation. For these reasons it is sometimes difficult to ascertain whether a particular family that came to Pennsylvania was of Zurich or Bernese origin. But the Amish were nearly all Bernese. A sizable number of the earliest Mennonite

⁷⁷ Interview with Levi Mellinger, Bluffton, Ohio, by the author on April 10, 1952.

⁷⁸ *Mennonite Yearbook and Directory*, 1906-28.

⁷⁹ Interview with Levi Mellinger, *op. cit.*

settlers in both the Skippack and Pequea settlements were of Zürich origin.

With the possible exception of the Schumacher family there were no Bernese Anabaptists in Pennsylvania before 1717. This year brought several families. Most of them settled in the Pequea settlement which had been established some ten years before by several Zurich Anabaptist families. The following names of families going to Pennsylvania from the Palatinate reveal Bernese connections: Hostetler, Kaufman, Hershey, Bauman, Burkhalter, Witmer, Brechbühl, Weber, Lehman, Baumgartner, Eby, Güngerich, Steiner, Liechty, Stauffer, and Wenger.

Likely one of the first Amish families to come to America was that of Barbara Yoder, whose husband died at sea. This family of ten members settled in the Oley region of what is now Berks County in 1714. It was not until 1733 that any sizable Amish immigration took place. During this decade the following well-known Amish family names appeared on the American scene: Hostetler, Rupp, Beiler, (T) Shantz, Müller, Bürki, Yoder, Gnaegi, Zaug, Jutzi, König, Glick, Troyer. Likely the first Amish congregation in America was the one established along the Northkill Creek in northwestern Berks County.

A series of Indian raids on the frontier was experienced by the pioneers in 1757. Several Amish families were driven from their homes and several members of the Jacob Hostetler family were killed. The life of the Amish community on the Northkill was greatly disrupted, most members going to regions less dangerous. The Conestoga Church was founded about this time. It has become the mother community for most other Amish communities farther west.

Before the middle of the eighteenth century the best lands in Southeastern Pennsylvania had been settled by the German and Scotch-Irish immigrants. The second generation of pioneers and the immigrants who came later pushed west. From Lancaster County they crossed the Susquehanna River into what are now Cumberland and York counties as early as 1728. They then went to Maryland and by 1730 some Mennonites were found in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. The first Virginia settlement was made in Page County but later the center of settlement in Virginia became Augusta and

Rockingham counties. Some of the early Virginia Mennonite family names reflect a Bernese background. These are: Burkhalter, Beery, Kaufman, Roth, Wenger, Weber, Hildebrand, Graybill, Fry, Niswander, and Stauffer.

At the same time small groups of Mennonites went up the Juniata River and crossed the Alleghenies where colonies were established before the Revolutionary War in what are now Westmoreland, Fayette, and Somerset counties. The first pioneer was Christian Blauch who went from Lancaster County to near the present site of Berlin, Somerset County, in 1767.

By the close of the Revolutionary War the demand for cheap lands for the surplus population in the older Pennsylvania communities became acute. The Mennonites had been made uncomfortable during the war by their refusal to support the army. This new government which had treated them with little respect and which seemed to crumble into anarchy when the war was over gave them little hope for toleration. When large tracts of good cheap land became available in Ontario it is not surprising that many Mennonites directed their steps to that area. In 1786 the first Mennonites settled just twenty miles west of Niagara. In 1800 the first settlements were made in what is now Waterloo County. Most of the early Ontario settlers seem to reflect a Zurich origin. Those of Bernese origin include: Güngerich, Eby, Bauman, Bürki, Burkholder, Gehman, Reist, Stauffer, (T) Schantz, and Witmer.

The Amish were also pioneers in the westward migration of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They did not follow the Mennonites to Virginia or Ontario. They went more directly west, first settling in Somerset County in 1767. The families of Tschantz, Joder, Blauch, and Hostetler figured early in this settlement. About 1790 the picturesque Kischacoquillas Valley was first discovered by the Amish. They bought large tracts of land from the Scotch-Irish and formed the largest of the Pennsylvania Amish settlements here.

Mennonites first settled in Ohio in 1803 near Bremen, south of Columbus. These pioneers came from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. As early as 1808 Amish settled along the Sugar Creek in Tuscarawas County in Eastern Ohio. Natives of Lancaster County also formed the first Mennonite settlements in Niagara County, New York, in 1810. As mentioned elsewhere in this study the first

Mennonites in Indiana were Swiss immigrants who settled near the present site of Berne in 1838. The first Pennsylvania Mennonites settled in Elkhart County in 1842.

Peter Maurer, an Alsatian Amish immigrant, settled along Rock Creek in McLean County, Illinois, in 1829. The first Mennonite to locate in Illinois was Benjamin Kendig from Augusta County, Virginia, in 1833.

In 1840 the first settlement in Iowa was made near the West Point in Lee County along the banks of the Mississippi River. The first settlers were Amish immigrants who had lived in Butler County, Ohio, for several years. The first settlement in Missouri was made by Amish in Hickory County in the 1850's. Nebraska was also first settled by the Amish group. The first settlement was made in 1873 in Seward County only a year before the Russian Mennonites entered that state. Settlements in Kansas were started about 1870 by Mennonites. In the two decades that followed, Mennonite and Amish settlements were made in the western states, continuing as far as Oregon.⁸⁰

Volhynian Mennonites of Bernese Origin and Their Descendants

The story of the Volhynian Mennonites is one of the most involved but at the same time most interesting ones in all the annals of Mennonite history. The group was basically Swiss but did not originate as a group until they were in Volhynia. Montbéliard, Palatinate, and Alsatian Mennonite communities contributed members to this group. The families of Schrag, Kauffmann, Güngerich, Zürcher, Gering, and Ewy indicate a Bernese origin. Most of the group also appears to have belonged to the Amish wing of the church.

Between 1782 and 1789 six Mennonite families from the Palatinate settled south of Lemberg in Galicia. In 1786 a second group of eighteen families settled in a near-by village. In 1791 at least six persons arrived from Montbéliard.

By 1795 religious restrictions were imposed upon them by the government. The Mennonites were required to have Lutheran pastors preside at marriages and funerals. It became increasingly difficult to secure enough farm land. Upon the invitation of the

⁸⁰ C. Henry Smith, *The Mennonite Immigration to Pennsylvania* (Norristown, 1929), passim.

Hutterites to join their Bruderhof near Wiszenka in the Russian province of Czernigow, eleven Mennonite families left Galicia in 1795. The group did not want to become a part of the Bruderhof, so in a few years moved west to Edwardsdorf in Volhynia. Some of the Montbéliard group lived at Michelsdorf near Warsaw for a time before moving to Edwardsdorf. The others went farther west in Volhynia to found the colony of Horodisch in 1837. In 1861 when Czar Alexander II made much land available to Russian peasants the greater portion of the Edwardsdorf settlement moved about 100 miles east to the villages of Kotosufka and Newmanufka where they purchased land. Other smaller settlements were also made in Volhynia.⁸¹

During 1874 most of the Volhynian Swiss migrated to America. Andreas Schrag, who was sent by them the year before to investigate possibilities in America, led the first group of ten families to near Yankton, South Dakota. Other large settlements were made near Pretty Prairie, Kansas, and near Moundridge, Kansas.

Scattered Settlements of Largely Bernese Origin

There have been numerous groups of Bernese Anabaptists who have started small communities and churches in various places in the western part of the United States or have joined in with some non-Bernese in some settlement or community venture.

Especially during the period from 1890 to 1915 groups of young men or young married couples from the various Bernese Anabaptist settlements in Ohio and Indiana went west to find more opportunity to make a living. As a result there can be found in every western state small groups of families of Bernese Anabaptist origin who went there during that period. A sizable number can be found in Kansas, Whitman County, Washington, and Los Angeles, California.

A small congregation of Swiss Mennonites located near Ransom, Ness County, in western Kansas during the 1880's and 1890's. They joined the General Conference Mennonites in 1893. By 1896 they had twenty-nine members.⁸² The minister of the group for

⁸¹ Martin Schrag, *European History of the Swiss Volhynian Mennonites*, passim. Ms. 1952.

⁸² H. P. Krehbiel, *History of the General Conference of the Mennonites of North America*, chart following p. 398

many years was Jacob Aeby. In 1911 the membership of the group was forty.⁸³

The majority of the members of the Mennoville, El Reno County, Oklahoma, Church were Bernese in origin. Joel Sprunger, formerly of Berne, Indiana, was their minister during the 1890's. They joined the General Conference in 1896 at which time there were twenty-five members.⁸⁴ As early as 1894 they were represented at the Western District Conference.⁸⁵ At present the congregation has fourteen members.⁸⁶

The Colfax, Whitman County, Washington, congregation also has a strong Bernese element. It joined the General Conference Mennonites in 1893. In 1896 there were twenty-eight members.⁸⁷ In 1911 the membership was thirty.⁸⁸ The present membership is 139.⁸⁹

In the spring of 1912 three families and six single persons left the Putnam County settlement for Saskatchewan.⁹⁰ They found an entirely different type of agriculture practiced there. After several droughts which caused almost complete crop failures they all returned.

A similar failure in founding a settlement was experienced in 1905, by a group of Swiss Mennonites and others from the Bluffton, Ohio, district who attempted to start a community near Olsen, Midland County, Michigan.

In almost any large city in the United States can be found persons descended from a Swiss Mennonite pioneer. Most of these have been lost to the Mennonite Church.

⁸³ H. P. Krehbiel, *Mennonite Churches of North America*, p. 18.

⁸⁴ See note 77.

⁸⁵ *Gesamt-Protokolle Kansas- und Westlichen-Distrikt Konferenz.*

⁸⁶ *Handbook of Information*, op. cit.

⁸⁷ See note 77.

⁸⁸ H. P. Krehbiel, *Mennonite Churches of North America*, p. 30.

⁸⁹ See note 86.

⁹⁰ *Bluffton (Ohio) News*, March 14 and April 4, 1912.

VIII

Bernese Anabaptism in America in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

Emmental Culture on the American Frontier

Instead of settling in well-organized Mennonite communities in Pennsylvania, the Bernese Anabaptists chose the sparsely settled frontier land of Ohio and Indiana. Until that time only a few farmers were to be found in the areas they chose. The inhabitants, few as they were, were mostly the typical American frontiersmen, the Scotch-Irish or English hunter-trapper-opportunist, who was only at home on the outskirts of civilization. He caused and followed the retreat of the Indians. Some bought government land, cleared a small patch, built a cabin, sold it for two to four times as much as it cost them, and moved on west to repeat this process. Such an unsettled person the staid and steady Bernese farmer could only observe with some suspicion. But at the same time he could not help absorbing some of the ways of the frontier and mix a few "Yankee" ideas with his own imported from the Emmental.

The first few years found many contacts necessary for the Bernese Anabaptist farmers with the surrounding population. New words entered their vocabulary; some even learned enough English to converse intelligently in that language. After the settlement grew, fewer occasions arose for outside contacts as the communities became nearly self-sufficient. In this way it was possible for one and even two generations of them to live in the United States without learning the English language.

The bounty of food overwhelmed the first settlers. It was no exaggeration when they wrote that "the poorest farmers in America eat better than the most wealthy in Switzerland." The expanse and fertility of the land impressed them greatly. And even more, they could own the land they farmed by paying a rather small sum of money. It took them some time to adjust to these conditions. They were used to great thrift. Here thrift was of secondary importance. They were used to long, hard, steady toil ending in a completed task

on their little plateau farms. But here there was no end to the work. If there was not planting and cultivating to be done, then one had to build buildings or clear more woodland or drain swampland. They seldom knew when to stop, especially when opportunity for wealth lay before them for more and more labor. As a result few lived to old age; most aged rapidly. Not only hard work shortened their lives but also disease. The swamps which were prevalent in the wooded areas carried all manner of disease. Most tragic was typhoid fever. It struck their settlements in epidemic proportions. The only medical provisions accessible to them were far inferior to what they had known in Europe. More reliance was put in herb, tea, and poultice treatments. These worked well on milder ailments but were of little use for serious cases.

Their settlements soon became model farm communities. They had chosen good land almost without exception. But more to their credit was the fact that their land remained fertile under the good agricultural practices which they had imported and adjusted to prevailing conditions. At first they built log houses and log barns after the fashion of their Yankee neighbors. Most of these gave way within a generation to the larger frame buildings. Some of these buildings reflected the style of their former Bernese homes but just as many reflected the plain Puritan style of New England. The barns were usually of the bank variety resembling the Emmental barn, sometimes referred to as "Swiss barns."

Thus the Bernese Anabaptists in Ohio and Indiana built a type of community all their own. It was largely a result of their native Emmental mind although much was adopted from their "Yankee" neighbors.

Occupations

Because of economic necessity the Anabaptists in the Jura had not only to know the art of farming poor land but were also compelled to learn a trade or handicraft in order to make a living. When these people came to America they naturally continued their trades to a certain extent. In a community of Swiss Mennonites there could be found men who knew such trades as that of a cooper, book-binder, broommaker, shoemaker, weaver, spinner, bleacher, basket weaver, wood turner, cabinetmaker, or cheese maker. Many of these arts were lost with the first generation that settled in America.

However, Wayne County, Ohio, is still noted for its Emmmental variety of cheese. The art of woodworking was also preserved. There are a number of outstanding cabinetmakers and carpenters among this group. Berne, Indiana, is well known throughout the United States for its furniture factories. But most of this group are still engaged in farming. Here they have made their greatest contribution. It is an exception to see a farm belonging to one of these families that is not well kept. Most of the settlements were made where there was fertile soil which generally was kept so by proper farm methods.

The farm has always been considered a family affair, not merely a job for the head of the house. The women helped in the fields during the busy seasons of the year. They usually were responsible for the milking, and care of chickens. Another task for the women folk was planting and caring for a garden. The men did the bulk of the field work which was mostly hard hand work at first. As the work became simpler with the machinery being introduced, more land was cleared and as a result there was just as much work to be done.¹

Marriage and the Family

Since the church was the center of activity of the Swiss Mennonite community it was usually here that young people met. In Switzerland and later in America it was customary for the suitor to walk home with his girl friend from church or whatever the occasion might be. Later buggies, and still later automobiles, took the place of walking. The entertainment took no definite form. At times the gathering of flowers, nuts, or fruit brought them much pleasure. At other times the suitor called at the girl's home and spent the evening playing games or just talking.

Marriage took place early in life, often at the age of seventeen or eighteen although twenty was about average. Now with education taking a greater amount of time in the life of a young person, the average has been raised by three or four years.

There were few rules for courtship but many for marriage. The most important forbade marriage to a non-Mennonite. The penalty attached to this was the ban or excommunication if the err-

¹ Kaj Anton Kolthoff, *Culture Factors of the Putnam County Mennonites*, 48-54.

ing party did not make a public acknowledgment of his wrongdoing. This led some to leave the church and others to bring their mates into the Mennonite Church. If a couple decided to get married, the consent of both parents was all that was necessary. Two weeks before the marriage the bans were published by the deacons before the church. Banning an individual for not marrying in the church and the custom of publishing the bans was dropped about 1900 by all except three of the most conservative groups.

Marriages were usually held after church on Sunday or some morning during the week. Before 1900 the ceremony took place in the home of the bride with few exceptions. This custom probably originated in Switzerland where they had no church building and meetings of this nature had to take place in the home. The entire service was simple though it lasted from two to three hours depending on how many ministers were present. Afterwards the wedding dinner was served. Originally the dinner was quite simple but as time went on and food became more plentiful these became sumptuous affairs served to as many as one hundred and fifty guests. At the present time church weddings are the general practice with a reception following the ceremony.

In the giving of gifts to the newly married couple utility was emphasized. Quilts, linen, canned goods, silver, and other household articles were much appreciated. It was customary for parents who could afford it to present the couple with a piece of land or a sum of money. The girls with well-to-do parents were usually the most sought after by the young men.

The young couple in Switzerland had to find a plot of ground and house in the mountains to rent. But in America they usually had to build their own house and barn on a plot of ground that they bought or was given to them. This was done with the aid of their neighbors. House-raising and barn-raising were big events. For the children this was a frolic but for the men it meant much hard work. If the frame was not already assembled, the men toiled diligently until it was ready to be raised. After the boards were cut into proper lengths, they were nailed together to form a section. Then, when all was ready they would put the end logs in the holes made for them at each corner, then raise the beams into place by means of poles with spikes on the ends. Once in place they were

fastened by means of wooden pegs. The men next nailed the first layer of boards on the frame. After the sides were completed, the roof boards were nailed. These were followed by hand-hewn shingles. It was in this manner that their homes and barns were built. After the work was done long tables were spread with a sumptuous meal.²

Other co-operative enterprises included husking bees, log rollings, and aiding some member of the community who was sick by harvesting a crop for him. In the Putnam County community this same spirit is continued in a somewhat modified form in an insurance company called "The Mennonite Mutual Aid Insurance Company." It is limited to the community and immediately surrounding area. Insurance is only on property. Rates are paid according to losses.

Families were large, as was true in most pioneer communities. Eight children in a family was quite average while twelve and even fifteen were not uncommon. At a very young age there were tasks that could be done by the children. Little time was spent foolishly. Strict discipline was enforced. Though not inclined to much demonstration of affection they were kind to one another and the best of relations usually existed among members of the family as well as among neighbors. Differences were settled peaceably, sometimes with the help of the ministry.

Religion played an important part in the family life. In most families it was customary to hold a morning worship period for guidance and strength for the day's labors. In the evening a devotional period was also held to thank God for His care throughout the day. God's blessing was always invoked before meals and thanks returned after the meal. Especially before the time of Sunday schools, Bible study was stressed in the home and often the children were required to learn some Scripture by memory. Thus, family life was linked closely to the church.

The Church

In 1660, when the Bernese government asked the Bernese Anabaptists what their doctrines were, they gave them a copy of the *Dortrecht Confession of Faith* which the Dutch Brethren and also

² Sprunger, *op. cit.*, 10-11.

some Alsatian churches had recently agreed upon.³ The Swiss did not agree with the articles relating to the observance of feet washing as an ordinance nor the practice of shunning excommunicated members. The churches that joined the General Conference Mennonite Church accepted the confession of faith written by Cornelis Ris in 1766 for the Dutch Mennonites. The articles in the Ris confession that were not practiced by the Swiss were omitted.

The Strasbourg Discipline of 1568, which the Bernese had ascribed to, remained their rule of discipline until the twentieth century.⁴ The Old Order Amish and a few of the most conservative Swiss congregations still use it.

Each church was independent. The conferences that they held were gatherings of the church officials to discuss how various problems should be handled. No rules were passed but usually perfect union and understanding were arrived at through these meetings.⁵

The organization was somewhat different from any other church. At the head of any well-established church there was a bishop, sometimes called elder (*Voelliger* or *Aeltester Diener*). He was assisted by one or more ministers (*Diener am Wort*, *Lehrer zum Buch*, or *Prediger zum Buch*). One or more deacons (*Armendiener* or *Armenpfleger*) completed the church ministry. All these positions were for life unless misconduct or disability caused the congregation to vote dismissal.

The means of election was by lot. Each member of the congregation was permitted to submit the name of the fellow member who he thought would make a suitable minister. Often over five names were submitted and sometimes as many as twelve or even eighteen.^{5a} At a later meeting a book was provided for each candidate and placed on a table at the front of the church. Each candidate went to the front and took a book. One of these books contained a slip of paper with the words from Acts 1:24: "Shew whether of these two thou hast chosen." The man receiving this book was the chosen one. This method of choosing church leaders is based on the

³ John Horsch, *Mennonites in Europe* (Scottsdale, 1942), 263.

⁴ Harold S. Bender, "The Strasburg Discipline of 1568," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, I, 57-66.

⁵ Christian B. Steiner, *Record Book*, 28 ff. See also *History of Sonnenberg Church*, 5-6.

^{5a} See Sonnenberg Mennonite Church book.

selection of Matthias as the twelfth apostle as described in Acts 1:21-26.

Bishops were chosen from those who already had served as ministers or deacons. Their special duties included ordination of chosen church officials and the administration of communion. Each bishop was the final authority in the congregation in which he had been selected as head. The minister did the preaching and interpreting of the Bible. With the aid of the deacons he kept the discipline of the church. He conducted church trials and acted as mediator if any disturbance occurred among the members. He was authorized to conduct marriages and funerals. The deacons assisted the minister in conducting church affairs, and were substitutes in the case of absence of higher officials. They were also ministers to the poor, in charge of collecting gifts and aiding those in need.

No church official received a salary. Each was expected to earn a living by other means even though he should spend much time for the church. Occasionally donations in the form of produce were given the minister by members of the church.

Membership was obtained by baptism upon confession of faith or a letter from a sister church.

Excommunication was the result of breaking a church rule or for commission of some wrong against person or property. When a case was brought before the attention of the bishop, he delegated a deacon to investigate it. If the person was penitent, he might remain a member if he made a confession of his wrongdoing before the entire church. If he was recalcitrant, he was put out of the church. If he reconsidered the matter some time later and made a confession before the church, his membership was reinstated. This was their method of keeping the church "pure."

The Bernese Anabaptists believed that there were two types of people: those conformed to the world and those conformed to Christ. As a result they felt that their conformance to Christ should have an outward expression in the way they conducted themselves, what they wore, and their manner of living.

They believed that all had to be done in simplicity. Homes and churches had to be built over a simple style. No extravagance dared to be shown in carriages. Attire had to be somber and of a simple pattern. Temperance in drinking alcoholic beverages was stressed.

Insurance was forbidden as it put more trust in man than in God. Lightning rods were proscribed for the same reason. The oath was forbidden since Christ said, "Swear not at all; . . . but let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil" (Matthew 5:34-37). No participation was permitted in civil government. Biblical nonresistance was strictly observed. But they insisted that they should be obedient to the governments so far as the laws did not conflict with their Bible-guided conscience.

The church building, as the service itself, was extremely simple. At first a log building and later a frame church was erected to house those who came to worship. No church steeple, no bell, nor any stained glass windows adorned it. Rows of benches without backs faced each other; the right side for the men and the left for the women. Midway to the front in the center aisle was a table around which the singers sat who were responsible for starting the songs. The church officials sat in the front row on the men's side. The minister stood in front of the table.⁶

The worship service was simple and without ritual. There was no set time to begin the service but the largest share of them arrived at the same time. If some had to wait they did not mind because visiting with their friends was always the chief source of gaining news outside their own little sphere. After the minister called for the meeting to begin and gave a few remarks a song was sung. The *Vorsänger* (song leader) gave the pitch on a tuning fork after which he and the singers who sat at the table especially made for them, led out on the announced song. All brought their own hymnbooks. Until the 1860's the *Ausbund* was used.⁷ All the singing was done in one part only. There was no accompaniment. They were slow, unrhythmic songs with many verses sung to tunes that had been handed down from generation to generation. The minister read an entire chapter for his text and then usually started with the story of Adam and Eve and went through the Bible story to Revelation. The

⁶ See drawings of the early church buildings in the Putnam County, Ohio, community as they appear opposite page 148.

⁷ *Ausbund. Das ist Etliche schöne Christliche Geseng. . . .* This is the earliest hymnbook known to have been used by the Bernese Anabaptists. The first edition was dated 1564. This hymnal is still used by the Old Order Amish Mennonites.

sermon often lasted two hours and the entire service from three to four hours. After the minister had finished the sermon a deacon or another minister or maybe both gave a short testimony to that which had been said. The one who gave this testimony remained seated with bowed head. Sometimes this part of the church service lasted as long as half an hour. Prayers were read from prayer books at times but usually given extemporaneously. Another hymn or two closed the service unless a special church meeting was held to discuss the erring actions of a member. Here they ruled on any disobedience such as the showing of pride in one's dress or committing an unchristian act.

The members usually walked to church. Often they had to walk as far as six miles each way. Some thought that the horses and oxen should be given a day of rest. Later many used spring wagons. Most families constituted an entire wagonload. During the rainy season mud boats were used.

Nonconformity to the ways of the world found expression in their outward appearance. The women wore long plainly made dresses of a dark color, black being predominant. No lace, pleats, trimming, or figured material was allowed. They wore aprons of a similar color. They were gathered full on a band that was tied around the waist, with the ties brought around to the front and tied in the middle. In later years it was customary in some of the communities for the young women to wear shorter white starched aprons to church. They also wore neckerchiefs. These were folded in half diagonally and worn with the point down the back. The ends were brought around to the front, crossed, and tucked in under the apron. Caps, or more properly called prayer coverings, were essential in all public services. This conformed with the injunction Paul gives in I Corinthians 11:5, 6 stating that women should have their heads covered while praying. These caps were black and rather close fitting, covering all the hair. They had a black bow and two streamers in the back. They were usually made of cashmere, though some who could afford it wore silk ones. In the winter the women wore head shawls over the caps; in the summer bonnets were worn. Some wore the head coverings in the home during devotions and family prayers. The women wore capes instead of coats. These capes had no collars but were gathered on a band at

the neck. Shawls came into style a little later. At the funerals of relatives and when taking communion they wore small white head shawls. Their hair was combed straight back without parting in the middle.

The men, too, had their peculiar form of dress. They wore low-crowned, broad-brimmed woolen hats. Hooks and eyes were used on their coats. There were no turned-down collars on their coats. The trousers were of a different cut than we know today. A flap was fastened on each side instead of buttoning in the middle. The men, too, wore their hair in a different fashion. They were allowed to wear beards but no mustaches because of the military appearance a mustache gave at that time.

To get a good picture of how these people looked from seventy-five to one hundred years ago one needs only to attend an Old Order Amish Mennonite meeting of today. In the main the Amish meeting is conducted the same and the clothes worn very similar to the Bernese Anabaptists of that time.⁸

Compulsory military service was a reason why the Bernese Anabaptists were anxious to leave Switzerland and France. In this country they were free from military duty until the Civil War. At the time war seemed imminent they got out their copies of the *Martyrs' Mirror* and reviewed just why as a people they had suffered for their beliefs ever since their inception. When the military draft was enforced in October, 1862, a number of the Swiss Mennonites were called. It was possible for them to get a substitute or pay \$300 in cash. In most of the churches collections were taken for those members who could not afford to pay their own exemption fee. Only a few in each community joined the military forces.⁹

Participation in governmental affairs was strictly forbidden. To hold office was to forfeit church membership. But, inconsistently enough, they early took advantage of their right to vote and as a group supported the Democratic party. The story of how one member was nominated and elected justice of the peace is often told. Following his election a church meeting considered his case and decided to excommunicate him despite his plea that it was the vote of

⁸ Material for most of the above section gathered from numerous interviews with older residents of the Putnam County community.

⁹ Sprunger, *op. cit.*, 13-14.

his fellow members that put him into office. Another member of the same community found it convenient to affiliate himself with the near-by Swiss Reformed Church during his terms of office.

The change from the conservatism just described to their present-day aspect where most things typically Bernese Anabaptist have been forgotten, is a story that is closely linked up with the history of their outside contacts. As long as they had no fellowship with other than their own Swiss Mennonites they changed little. When the Wadsworth Institute sent out its leaders into the various communities with their different ideas, changes were rapidly effected. When these ministers came dressed in up-to-date clothes and their wives and children wore hats and dresses cut to the style of the day and then called themselves Mennonites, these Swiss people were puzzled. When some of the young Swiss ministers attended this school and returned to preach differently than was ordinarily preached, omitting the stress on outward nonconformity, further changes were effected. Starting in the 1870's this change was almost complete by 1900 in most of the groups.

Not only was their outward appearance changed but also belief in their Biblical doctrines that they had held for so many centuries. By the time of the first World War few young men asserted their position as nonresistant conscientious objectors to participation in war. In World War II only a very small per cent took this stand.

From 1870 to 1895, again through the influence of the Wadsworth Institute, their churches joined the General Conference Mennonite Church, a group of liberal-minded Mennonite churches which had started their conference meetings in eastern Pennsylvania in 1847. This was a far cry from the conferences held occasionally by the ministers of the Bernese Anabaptists for consultation on various problems of their churches. Not all were satisfied to join a group seemingly so foreign to them. In fact the two communities in Wayne County, Ohio, were affected little by this movement. Only a small segment left the main church and affiliated themselves with the General Conference Mennonite Church. In the Putnam County, Ohio, and in the Indiana and Missouri congregations it was different. Only small groups in each of these communities did not fall in line with the General Conference group.¹⁰

¹⁰ Much of the factual information concerning the Swiss Mennonites' relation to the General Conference Mennonite Church was gained from Pannabecker, *op. cit.*

Language, Literature, and School

When the Bernese Anabaptists arrived in America few of the immigrants knew any other language than their Bernese manner of speech. Some who had lived at Normanvillars knew the French *patois* of the region. Many of the first generation never learned English well enough to be understood without some difficulty. With succeeding generations the situation changed. While there are a sizable number of families who teach their children the now English-saturated version of the Bernese dialect, most of the younger generation know only a few words in this tongue.

The Bernese Anabaptists had their favorite version of the Bible. It was printed in a type of Swiss-German, easily understood by them. It was first published by Christoph Froschauer in 1524-29 and came to be known in Switzerland as the *Täufer Bibel*.¹¹ The last printing was made in 1744. This Bible and their *Ausbund* hymnbook together with the *Martyrs' Mirror* were the most common books on the shelves of the early Bernese Anabaptists. It was usual for the minister to present each new communicant with a copy of the *Ausbund* and a Froschauer New Testament. Each were neatly bound in leather and the year of baptism and the initials of the owner engraved in raised letters on the metal plate on the cover.

In schooling they kept up with their English neighbors. Their own German schools continued with some modifications until about 1900. In the early days their compact communities afforded opportunity to have a type of school that was almost parochial in nature. The teachers were men of their community with only a knowledge of the rudiments as their equipment for teaching. Many of these district schools were made up completely of Swiss Mennonites. They were taught in German the regular subjects of reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as Bible. Country schools were disbanded and centralized schools took their place in the decade of 1930.

Though these changes have taken place the typical attributes of industry, frugality, simplicity, and integrity have remained to a strong degree characteristic of the descendants of the immigrant Bernese Anabaptists.

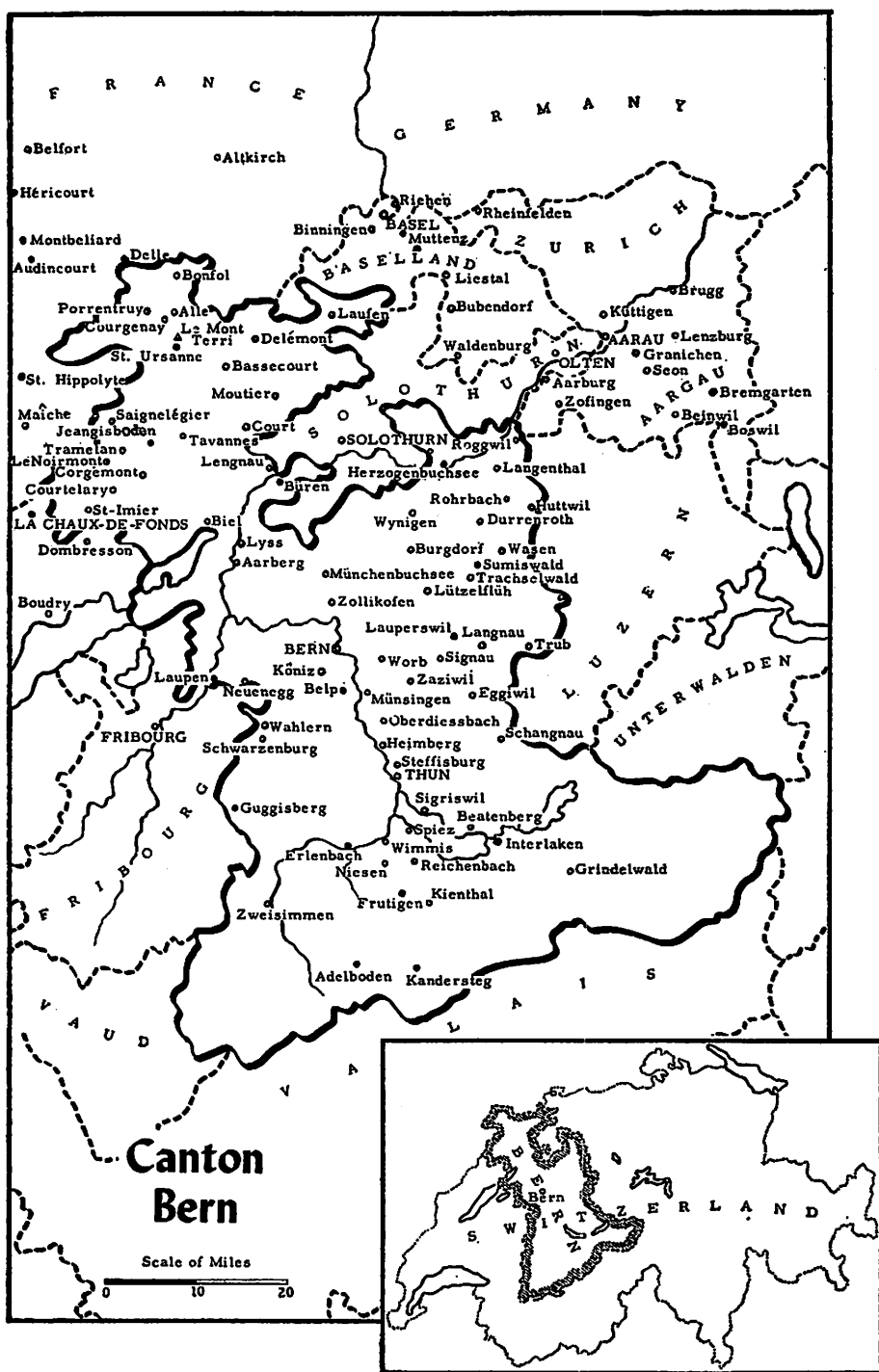
¹¹ Adolf Fluri, "Froschauer Bibeln und Testamente," *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, II, 15.

Future of Bernese Anabaptism in America

The long story of persecution, intolerance, and migrations was soon forgotten by the Bernese Anabaptists after coming to the American scene. There was no need to remember these gruesome tales. Freedom was theirs and they thought the future held no restrictions. With a few notable exceptions the group changed from ultraconservatism to one of the most progressive American Mennonite churches. When questions arose in the years that followed concerning their state duties, they found themselves in an awkward position of uncertainty as to what they did believe.

It can only be hoped that with the present generation's quest for knowledge concerning its Anabaptist forebears the spiritual qualities and convictions of their sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and eighteenth-century spiritual ancestors will again be discovered and made a part of their lives.

The Bernese Anabaptists have added a peaceful chapter to the turbulent pioneer history of Ohio and Indiana. By surveying their past and applying the findings they can add an even more important one in the future.



Appendix

I

BERNESE ANABAPTIST-MENNONITE CONGREGATIONS IN AMERICA

Deriving from Nineteenth Century Immigration

<i>Wayne County, Ohio</i>	<i>Members</i>
Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, Dalton, Ohio	217
Kidron Mennonite Church, Dalton, Ohio	475
Salem Mennonite Church, Dalton, Ohio	215
*Crown Hill Mennonite Church, Marshallville, Ohio	174
<i>Putnam County, Ohio</i>	
St. John Mennonite Church, Pandora, Ohio	230
Grace Mennonite Church, Pandora, Ohio	453
Defenseless Swiss Mennonite Church, Pandora, Ohio	Extinct
Missionary Church, Pandora, Ohio	100
<i>Allen County, Ohio</i>	
Ebenezer Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio	511
*First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio	527
Evangelical Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio	53
Zion Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio	Extinct
Reformed Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio	52
*Missionary Church, Bluffton, Ohio	50
First Mennonite Church, Lima, Ohio	34
<i>Hancock County, Ohio</i>	
*Federated Church, New Stark, Ohio	25
(Formerly New Stark Mennonite Church)	
<i>Lucas County, Ohio</i>	
Reformed Mennonite Church, Waterville, Ohio	8
<i>Paulding County, Ohio</i>	
Mennonite Church, Junction, Ohio	Extinct
<i>Waterloo County, Ontario, Canada</i>	
Geiger Church, New Hamburg, Ontario	92
<i>Adams County, Indiana</i>	
First Mennonite Church, Berne, Indiana	1,312
Neuenschwander Church, Berne, Indiana	6
Baumgartner Church, Berne, Indiana	Extinct
Münsterberg Church, Berne, Indiana	Extinct
Christian Sprunger Congregation, Berne, Indiana	Extinct
(Old) Mennonite Congregation, Berne, Indiana	Extinct
<i>Tippecanoe County, Indiana</i>	
*First Mennonite Church, La Fayette, Indiana	51
<i>Polk County, Iowa</i>	
Swiss Mennonite Congregation, Polk City, Iowa	Extinct
<i>Hickory County, Missouri</i>	
Swiss Mennonite Congregation, Wheatland, Missouri	Extinct
<i>Morgan and Moniteau Counties, Missouri</i>	
Bethel Mennonite Church, Fortuna, Missouri	137
<i>Butler County, Kansas</i>	
Swiss Mennonite Church, Whitewater, Kansas	132
<i>Marion County, Oregon</i>	
*Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Pratum, Oregon	234
Total	5,038

*Membership no longer entirely of Swiss Mennonite extraction.

II

LIST OF ANABAPTISTS

WHO ATTENDED THE DEBATE AT BERN IN 1538¹

Hans Hotz from Amt Grüningen Zurich.
 Michael Ut, the tailor from Stams (Tyrol).
 Mathis Wiser from Bremgarten.
 Heinrich Wininger from Schaffhausen.
 Georg Träffer from Ammergau (Bavaria).
 Especially Hotz, Wiser, and Träffer spoke.
 Andres Rappenstein from Rohrbach.
 Hans Meier, called Pfistermeyer from Aarau. Was Anabaptist but turned Protestant.
 The following were from Bern:
 Hans Vogt from Villigen (Aargau).
 Hans Luthy from Eggenwil (Aargau).
 They also spoke some.
 Bernhardt Agerder from Eggiwil.
 Ullly Nüwenschwandt from Eggiwil.
 Bernhardt Jenni from Eggiwil.
 Christen Saltzman from Eggiwil.
 Welti Gerber from Röthenbach.
 Ullly Rupp }
 Clouwy (Niklaus) Rupp } Brothers from Stouffen (near Eggiwil).
 Steffen from Rügsegg.
 Hanns Schellenberg from Benbrunnen.
 Hans im Hanwyll from Signau.
 Hans Kräwenbül from Signau.
 Freidli Dieboltswiler from Signau.
 Peter Schwendiman from Grosse Hönstetten (Grosshöchstetten).
 Felix Schuohmacher from Grosse Hönstetten (Grosshöchstetten).
 Casper Kolb from Walckringen.
 Andres Schindler from Thun.
 Caspar Zougck from Schuffelbull (near Sumiswald).
 Lentz Aberly from Sumiswald.
 Hans Haslibacher from Sumiswald.
 Jost Miescher from Burgdorf.
 Ulli Flückinger from Niederhuttwyl.
 Christian Brugger from Rohrbach. Spoke a little.
 Hans Ryff from Madiswil.
 Jacob Sutter from Aarberg.
 Jaci Casper from Aarberg.
 Ulli Huntzicker from Schöffland.
 Hans Huser from Lentzburg.
 Michel Zinck from Busswil (Aarau).
 Clouwy Zinck from Busswil (Aarau).
 Peter Zinck from Busswil (Aarau).
 Hans Heinrich Schneider from Münstertal.
 Hans Schnider from Biel.
 Vyt (Veit) Herman from Wynigen.
 Dietrich from Steffisburg. After the debate he renounced Anabaptism and went home.

¹ This list is from the three extant copies of the proceedings of the debate located at the Staatsarchiv Bern, U.P. 80 and U.P. 80a.

III

LIST OF ANABAPTISTS

WHO FLED FROM BERN TO THE PALATINATE IN THE 1670's¹

George Liechti	Margaret Baumann
Hans Burkhalter	Christian Stauffer
Michael Ochsenbein	Ulrich Stauffer
Adam Burkhalter	Anna Stauffer
Christen Ummel	Daniel Stauffer
Melchior Brönnimann	Hans Stauffer
Margaret Bigler	Barbara Lehmann
Barbara Schläppi	Ulrich Kiener
Veronica Engel	Elisabeth Eichenberger
Ulrich Eicher	Michael Schenk
Barbara Reusser	Barbara Stalder
Michael Tschabold	Niclaus Heiler
Daniel Tschabold	Magdalena Kropf
Hans von Gunten	Barbara Wielmann
Margaret Bieri	Michael Müller
Margaret Ummel	Ulrich Stauffer
Barbara Neukomm	Katharina Kühni
Anna Neuenschwander	Peter Bachmann
Hans Eicher	Hans Müller
Hans Reusser	Christian Schenk
Daniel Reusser	Ursel Laubele
Margaret Anthoni	Barbara Bürki
Anna Neukommet	Hans Eymann
Catherine Denzler	Ulrich Eymann
Christian Neukommet	Hans Roth
Hans Neukommet	Hans Schneider
Christian Stauffer	Barbara Küeffer
Hans Wälti	Christian Wenger
Ulrich Strahm	Steffen Liechti
Ulrich Wiedmer	Ulrich Liechti
Christian Klari	Peter Baumgartner
Barbara Rindlisbacher	Maria Knubel
Magdalena Lüthi	Barbara Friederich
Peter Wälti	Barbara Schenk

¹ This list is taken from Müller, *op. cit.*, 200-4. The original is in the Archives of the Mennonite Church at Amsterdam, Holland, under the archive number 1248. Only the heads of families are given above.

IV

LIST OF BERNESE ANABAPTISTS

FOUND IN THE BISHOPRIC OF BASEL IN THE EARLY PART OF THE
18TH CENTURY¹

Moutier

Mairie de Tavanne. 1738-40.

Michel Ritchard at Sonnenberg.

Johannes Tordi at Fuet.

Catharina Beck, widow of Ulrich Kohler at Charbonniere.

Johannes Lehmann at Vion.

Peter Lehmann at Vion.

Johannes Schiltz at Sonnenberg.

Maria Kohler near Vion.

Mairie de Moutier. February, 1738.

Michel Ziegeler of Utzendorf at Mont Girod.

Christian Oberli of Lützelflüh at Mont Girod.

Christian Aschlimann of Rügsau at Mont Girod.

Hans Wahl of Bolligen at Mont Girod.

Verena Gerber at Mont Girod.

Christian Jacob of Trachselwald at Mont Girod.

Christian Burkhalter of Langnau at Mont Girod.

Madelaine Wantzenried of Worb lives at Mont Girod.

Peter Ramseyer of Eggiwil at Mont Girod.

Ulrich Liechti of Biglen at Champoz.

Hans Moser of Rüderswil at Petit Champoz.

Peter Ramseyer of Lauperswil at the base of Münsterberg.

Hans Leuenberger of Rüderswil at Tronday.

Andreas Zürcher of Sumiswald.

Niklaus Luginbühl of Gross Höchstetten at La Dozerce.

Hans Liechti of Eggiwil at La Dozerce.

Daniel Bichsel of Eggiwil at Chaluet.

Elisabeth and Barbara Jordi of Eriswil at Chaluet.

Niklaus Häuselmann of Worb at Couloux.

Christian Luginbühl of Gross Höchstetten at Cras de Pois.

Christian Schwartz of Schwarzenegg at Coulou.

Peter Niederhauser of Rüderswil at Chaluet.

Ulrich Niederhauser of Rüderswil at Chaluet.

Ulrich Rindesbacher of Lauperswil at Chaluet.

Peter Neuenschwander at Chaluet.

Peter Burkhalter at Chaluet.

Ursus Bürgger at Chaluet.

Madelaine and Catherine Schenk at Chaluet.

Ulrich Wälti of Rüderswil at Chaluet.

Peter Gerber of Steffisburg at Les Ecorcheresses.

Conrad Röthlisberger of Langnau at La Combe des Peux.

Hans Aeby of Eriswil at Montoz.

Jacob Hiltbrunner of Sumiswald at Montoz.

Johannes Dummermuth of Diesbach near Thun at Montoz.

Hans Habegger of Trub at Chaluet.

Ulrich Bichsel at Graiteray.

Magdalena, widow of Hans Rüfenacht at Graiteray.

Peter Brechbühl of Trub at Chaluet.

Hans Thomi at Chaluet.

Peter Kläy of Sumiswald at Chaluet.

Hans Trüssel of Sumiswald at Chaluet.

Caspar Reusser of Durrenroth at Chaluet.

¹ These lists were found in the *Staatsarchiv Bern*, B 245 *Mappe* 29. Only the heads of families are given here.

Michael Probst of Rüderswil at Graiterly.
 Hans Müller of Diesbach at Graiterly.
 Hans Kaufmann of Steffisburg at Graiterly.
 Oswald Hunsberger at Graiterly.
 Christina Trüssel at Graiterly.
 Margareta Loosli at Graiterly.
 Hans Gasser at Graiterly.
 Ulrich Maurer of Goldeville near Thun at Graiterly.
 Ulrich Moser of Biglen at Graiterly.
 David Locher of Lützelflüh at Graiterly.
 Hans Richeter of Sumiswald at Vargeron.
 Jacob Liechty of Biglen at Chaluët.
 Hans Berger of Signau at Chaluët.
 Elisabeth Lantz of Eriswil at Chaluët.
 Abraham Dreyer of Trub at Montedoz.
 Ulrich Schrag of Wynigen at Eschert.
 David Wiedmer of Rüderswil.
 Peter Röthlisberger at Roche.
 Andreas Ramseyer of Lauperswil at Münsterberg.
 Peter Kaufman of Steffisburg at Roche.
 Catharina Aebersold, widow of Peter Gerber of Schwarzenegg at Münsterberg.
 Daniel Neuenschwander.
 Christina Grundbach of Sumiswald at Chaluët.

Courtelary.

Sonceboz-Sombeval. February 22, 1745.

Christian Schwartz of Langnau.
 Benjamin Gäumer of Gross Höchstetten.
 Christian Steiner of Signau.
 Johannes Thomet of Diessbach.
 Johannes Liechti of Biglen.
 Christian Schnegg of Gross Höchstetten.
 Joseph Schönauer of Gross Höchstetten.
 Johannes Baumgartner of Lauperswil.
 Peter Luginbühl of Runkhofen.
 Peter Sommer of Sumiswald.
 Johannes Engel of Röthenbach.

Péry. March 12, 1745.

Michael Geiger of Röthenbach.
 Johannes Geiger of Röthenbach.
 Michael Langenecker of Trub.
 Johannes Jacob Kambli of Zurich.
 Johannes Burkhalter of Sumiswald.
 Michael Burki of Diessbach.
 Johannes Heinrich Turner of Sumiswald.
 Jacob Marti of Sumiswald.
 Peter Beck of Sumiswald.
 Ulrich Lerch of Sumiswald.
 Johannes Kameter of Sumiswald.
 Johannes Burki of Biglen.
 Adam Gillomen of Lengnau near Buren.
 Christian Burkhalter of Langnau.
 Peter Burkhalter of Trachselwald.
 Ulrich Burkhalter of Rüderswil.
 Joseph Wenger of Amsoldingen.

Corgémont.

Christian Wiedmer of Sumiswald.
 Ulrich Engel of Röthenbach.
 Jost Baumgartner of Langnau.
 Ulrich Neukommet of Eggiwil.
 Peter Probst of Lützelflüe.
 Christian Gäumann of Grosshöchstetten.
 Christian Rüfenacht of Worb.
 Johannes König of Herzogenbuchsee.
 Ulrich Zollner of Trub.

Cortébert.

Johannes Reusser of Langnau.
 Johannes Steiner of Langnau.
 Jonas Geiser of Langenthal.
 Ullrich Berger of Signau.
 Samuel Geiser of Langenthal.
 Simon Sigentaler of Biglen.
 Johannes Saam of Lützelflüe.
 David Ingold of Lauperswil.

Vauffelin and Plagne. February 20, 1745.

Jonas Stigeler of Schmetzing (Zurich).
 Peter Moser of Röthenbach.

Courtelary Parish. February 23, 1745.

Christian Winteregg of Oberhofen.
 Christian Augsburgur of Signau.
 Johannes Hochstettler of Schwarzenburg.

Cormeret.

Peter Neuenschwander of Langnau.

Pieterlen.

Peter Liechti of Biglen
 Elisabeth Jogs (?) of Vechingen.
 Catharina Berger of Lauperswil.

Tramelan.

Barbara Gerber of Langnau.
 Lantz Maurer of Diessbach.
 Niklaus Maurer of Diessbach.

V.

LIST OF BERNESE ANABAPTISTS

IN COMMUNE FLORIMONT, ARRONDISSEMENT DE BELFORT,
DEPARTMENT HAUT-RHIN, FRANCE, IN 1791¹

The widower Amstutz.
The widower Kauffman at Maison Rouge.
Christen Christener.
Christen Bösiger at du Fahy.
Hans Bösiger at du Fahy.
Joseph Hilty at Chateau Vert.
Hans Lehmann at Chateau Vert.
Philip Hilty, tilemaker.
Joseph Martin.
Hans Tanner.
Peter Kaufmann.
Hans Müzillmann (?).
Charles Berner at Normanvillars.
Johannes Stauffer at Normanvillars.
Johannes Amstutz at Normanvillars.
Ulrich Thüller at Normanvillars.
Christian Luginbühl at Normanvillars.
Daniel Steiner at Normanvillars.
Peter Thüller at Normanvillars.
Ulrich Bösiger at Normanvillars.
Johannes Steiner at Normanvillars.
Peter Luginbühl at Normanvillars.
Johannes Wenger at Normanvillars.

¹ This list is at the mairie of the Commune Florimont. It was made for military purposes. It appears to be the earliest list of the Normanvillars Anabaptists.

VI

LIST OF ANABAPTISTS IN CANTON BERN IN 1823¹

Oberamt Aarwangen.

Johannes Geiser of Langenthal. At La Chaux-de-Fonds. Minister.
 Samuel Geiser of Langenthal. At La Chaux-de-Fonds.
 Samuel Geiser of Langenthal. At La Chaux-de-Fonds.
 Johannes Geiser of Langenthal. At La Chaux-de-Fonds.
 Christen Geiser of Langenthal. At La Chaux-de-Fonds.
 Ulrich Geiser of Langenthal. At La Chaux-de-Fonds.
 Peter Geiser of Langenthal. At La Chaux-de-Fonds.
 Christen Geiser of Langenthal. At La Chaux-de-Fonds.
 Christian Liechti of Biglen at Rohrbach.

Oberamt Burgdorf.

Matthias Habegger of Trub at Thorbergschwendi

Oberamt Courtelary.

Bezirk Büderich and la Heutte.

Ulrich Baumgartner of Langnau at Safern.
 Peter Danner of Lüzelflüh at Sonceboz.
 Abraham Lerch of Sumiswald at la Heutte.
 Jacob Lehmann of Langnau at Sonceboz.
 Hans Lehman of Langnau at Tavannes.
 Durs Nussbaum of Lüterkofen at Büderich.
 Abraham Ramseyer of Trub at Büderich.
 Friederich Stauffer of Friedliswart at Châtelat.
 Christen Burkhalter of Rüderswil at Courtelary.
 Johannes Geiser of Langenthal at Cortébert.

Bezirk Cortébert Matten.

Christian Gerber of Schangnau at Corgémont.
 Hans Saam of Lützelflue at Courtelary.
 Ulrich Schnegg of Gross Höchstetten at Corgémont.
 Christen Steiner of Signau at Sonceboz.

Bezirk Sonnenberg.

Christen Baumgartner of Langnau at Tavannes.
 Christen Beer of Trub at Corgémont.
 Esai Bögli of Herzogenbuchsee at Tramelan.
 Peter Thüler of Goldbach at Tramelan.
 Abraham Falb of Biglen at Corgémont.
 Christen Gasser of Lauperswil at Tramelan.
 Niclaus Gerber of Langnau at Genevez.
 Adam Gillomen of Lengnau at Corgémont.
 Ulrich Geiger of Eriz at Tramelan.
 Hans Kohler of Sumiswald at Saicourt.
 Christen Lehmann of Langnau at Sonceboz.
 Ulrich Lehmann of Langnau at Genevez.
 Christen Lehmann of Langnau at Saicourt.
 Christen Lehmann of Langnau at Montbautier.
 Peter Lehmann of Langnau at Orange.
 Hans Lehmann of Langnau at Vion.
 Ulrich Lehmann of Langnau at Corgémont Berg.
 Peter Lehmann of Langnau at Rochette.
 Peter Moser of Rüderswil at Corgémont.
 Christen Rüfenacht of Eggiwil at Cortébert.

¹ Only the heads of families are taken from the list of 1823 as given in the *Controlle der Wiedertäufer*, I. SAB. B III, 388.

Christen Scheidegger of Sumiswald at Corgémont.
 David Scheidegger of Sumiswald at Corgémont.
 Isaak Schnegg of Gross Höchstetten at Tramelan.
 Peter Schnegg of Gross Höchstetten at Tramelan.
 Christian Schnegg of Gross Höchstetten at Tramelan. Elder.
 Abraham Schnegg of Gross Höchstetten at Tramelan.
 Christen Schnegg of Gross Höchstetten at Saicourt.
 Peter Sommer of Sumiswald at Vion.
 Ulrich Sommer of Sumiswald at Sonceboz.
 Johannes Sprunger of Oberwangen (Thurgau) at la Tanne.
 Christen Steiner of Signau at Corgémont.
 Johannes Tschanz of Oppligen at Tramelan.
 Abraham Tschanz of Oppligen at Tramelan.
 Hans Zink of Wierezwil at Corgémont.
 Niklaus Zink of Wierezwil at Corgémont.
 Hans Zürcher of Rüderswil at Sonceboz.
 Ulrich Zürcher of Rüderswil at Sonceboz.

Those attending church in Canton Neuenburg.

Ulrich Bärtschi at Verrieres.
 Johannes Geiser of Langenthal at Verrières.
 David Geiger of Eriz at Sonvillier.
 Ulrich Geiser of Langenthal at Sonvillier.
 Abraham Sommer of Sumiswald at St. Imier.
 Isaak Studler of Krattigen at Sonvillier.
 David Ummel of Diessbach at Sonvillier.

Oberamt Delsberg.

Johannes Klopfenstein at Delsberg.
 Peter Lehmann of Langnau at Courtételle.
 Anna Bögli, widow of Joh. Peter Bogli of Ochlenberg at Courtételle.
 Isaak Augsburg of Langnau at Courtételle.
 Christen Sommer of Sumiswald at Develier.
 Johann Sommer of Sumiswald at Develier.
 Michael Amstutz of Sigriswil at Bourignon.
 Christian Tschanz of Oppligen at Pleigne.
 Johannes Amstutz of Sigriswil at Undervelier.

Oberamt Freibergen.

Jonas Biberstein of Bözingen at Paturage la Fonges.
 Abraham Biberstein of Bözingen at Maison Rouge.
 Abraham Ummel of Diessbach at commune des Bois.
 Christen Wittmer of Sumiswald at Masseslin.

Oberamt Frutigen.

Ulrich Stüdler of Krattigen at La Chaux-de-Fonds.
 Christen Stäudler of Krattigen at La Chaux-de-Fonds.

Oberamt Konolfingen.

Ulrich Haueter of Trub at Otterbach.
 Hans Ramseyer of Eggiwil at Otterbach.
 Maria Ellenberger, widow of Peter Ellenberger of Trachselwald at Landiswil.
 Johannes Luginbühl of Gross Höchstetten now in Amt Münster.
 Niklaus Engel of Bowil at Bowil.
 Johannes Kohler of Landiswil at Rünkhofen.
 Hans Lehmann of Wyl at Aebersold.

Oberamt Münster.

Bezirk der Gemeinden Court und Münster.
 Jakob Nussbaum of Lüterkofen at Court.
 Urs Moser of Rüderswil at Court.

Hans Liechti of Biglen at Court.
 Ulrich Kläy of Sumiswald at Court.
 Christen Bichsel of Eggwil at Court.
 Peter Wälti of Rüderswil at Court.
 Christen Wälti of Rüderswil at Court.
 Christen Wälti of Rüderswil at Court.
 Ulrich Wälti of Rüderswil at Court.
 Christen Winteregg of Heiligenschwendi at Court.
 Christen Liechti of Biglen at Court.
 Peter Liechti of Biglen at Court.
 Ulrich Liechti of Biglen at Graiteri.
 Hans Bichsel of Eggilwil at Court.
 Christen Liechti of Biglen at Court.
 Hans Bichsel of Eggwil at Graiteri.
 Hans Zürfluh of Trub at Münster.
 Hans Bichsel of Eggilwil at Graiteri.
 Michael Nussbaum of Lüterkofen at Graiteri.
 Peter Liechti of Biglen at Court.

Bezirk der Gemeinden Münster, Perrefitte, Eschert, Greefelden, Roches and Renndorf.

Peter Sprunger of Oberwangen, Thurgau at Münsterberg.
 Peter Sprunger of Oberwangen, Thurgau at Münsterberg.
 Christen Sprunger of Oberwangen, Thurgau at Roches.
 Peter Sprunger of Oberwangen, Thurgau at Roches.
 Johannes Habegger of Trub at Roches.
 Johannes Ulrich Habegger of Trub at Eschert.
 Jakob Berner of Schafisheim, Aargau at Tronday.
 Ulrich Schrag of Wynigen at Münsterberg.
 Caspar Herdi of Holziken, Aargau at Perrefitte.
 Peter Oberli of Lützelflüh at Perrefitte.
 Christen Oberli of Lützelflüh at Perrefitte.
 Barbara Neuenschwander of Langnau at Roches.
 Ulrich Röthlisberger of Langnau at Münsterberg.
 Johannes Neuenschwander of Langnau at Perrefitte.
 Samuel Neuenschwander of Langnau at Münsterberg.
 Peter Neuenschwander of Langnau at Perrefitte.
 Michael Neuenschwander of Langnau at Münsterberg.
 Christen Neuenschwander of Langnau at Münsterberg.
 Christen Bichsel of Eggwil at Münster.
 Johannes Wiedmer of Rüderswil at Roches.
 Christen Bösiger of Rumisberg at Renndorf.
 Peter Luginbühl of Gross Höchstetten at Roches.
 Isaac Oberli of Lützelflüh at Erbsrein.

Bezirk der Gemeinden Mallerey, Champoz, Sorvilier, a portion of Court and Münster and Petit Champoz.

Ulrich Lehmann of Langnau at Mallerey.
 Niklaus Stauder of Gross Höchstetten at Mallerey.
 Andreas Kläy of Sumiswald at Souboz.
 Niklaus Hofstetter of Langnau at Champoz Mühli.
 Peter Baumgartner of Langnau at Sorvilier.
 Hans Luginbühl of Grosshöchstetten at Neuhaus.
 Hans Wähli of Bolligen at Munschero.
 Barbara Röthlisberger, Peter Wähli's widow, of Bolligen at Munschero.
 Hans Rameyer of Eggwil at Champoz.
 Isaak Studer of Grosshöchstetten at Munschero.
 Christen Widmer of Rüderswil at Munschero.
 Hans Moser of Rüderswil at Klein Champoz.
 Niklaus Moser of Rüderswil at Klein Champoz.

Bezirk der Gemeinden Souboz, Sornetan, Monible, Châtelat, La-Joux and Saicourt.

Johannes Zurflug of Trub at Souboz.
 Regina Nussbaum, widow of Moser of Rüderswil at Souboz.
 Ulrich Moser of Rüderswil at Souboz.
 Johannes Neuenschwander of Langnau at Souboz-berg.
 Michael Neuenschwander of Langnau at Souboz-berg.
 Anna Schrag, widow of Christen Burkhalter of Langnau at Souboz.
 Peter Thut of Seengen, Aargau at Souboz-berg. Minister.
 David Moser of Rüderswil at Sornetan.
 Christian Moser of Rüderswil at Sornetan.
 Peter Burkhalter of Langnau at Sornetan.
 Johannes Stauder of Zäziwil at Sornetan.
 Solomon Bögli of Ochlenberg at Sornetan.
 Christian Hertig of Rüderswil at Sornetan.
 Johannes Beer of Trub at Monible.
 David Hutmacher of Langnau at Moron.
 Christian Amstutz of Sigriswil at Châtelat.
 Peter Bögli of Ochlenberg at Moron.
 Hans Ulrich Berger of Langnau at Châtelat.
 Johannes Schlattbach of Ottenbach at Châtelat.
 Peter Wiedmer of Rüderswil at Châtelat.
 Johannes Amstutz of Sigriswil at la Joux.
 Samuel Gerber of Langnau at Saicourt.
 Johannes Aeberhard of Nennigkofen at Monible.
 Solomon Bögli of Ochlenberg at Saalberg.

Oberamt Nidau.

Johannes Nussbaum of Lüterkofen at Magglingen.
 Bendicht Wahli of Bolligen at Magglingen.

Oberamt Pruntrut.

Johannes Luginbühl of Grosshöchstetten at Pruntrut.
 Johann Amstutz of Sigriswil at Lugnez.
 Johannes Hilty of Oberönz at Bomour.
 Jacob Stucki at Buix.
 Johannes Stucki at Mormont.
 Christen Stucki at Mormont.
 Christian Baumgartner of Langnau at Monterri.
 Johannes Rich at Montreux.
 Johannes Wiedmer of Sumiswald at Valbert.
 Ulrich Bösiger of Rumisberg at Pruntrut.
 Ulrich Schrag of Wynigen at Pruntrut.

Oberamt Signau.

Hans Peter Bachman of Langnau at Ilfisschachen.
 Peter Herrmann of Langnau at Ilfis.
 Ulrich Blaser of Langnau at Häfischwand.
 Hans Wittmer of Sumiswald at Wasen.
 Christian Bek of Sumiswald at Langnau.
 Hans Ulrich Röthlisberger of Signau at Bühl.
 Samuel Zürcher.
 Peter Schenk.
 Christian Gerber of Langnau at Gibel. Minister.
 Peter Pfister of Lauperswil Viertel at Schwandaker.
 Ulrich Kipfer of Langnau at Reingut.
 Michael Kipfer of Langnau at Pfaffenbach.
 Ulrich Röthlisberger of Langnau at auf dem Gugger.
 Michael Fuhrer of Langnau at untern Stok.
 Christian Berger of Langnau at untern Stok.
 Hans Blaser of Langnau at auf Linen.
 Peter Gerber of Langnau at Oberhulden.
 Ulrich Kipfer of Langnau at im oberen Stok.

Christen Baumgartner of Langnau at Labach.
 Hans Aeschliman of Langnau at auf dem Grat.
 Peter Berger of Langnau at Reinguth.
 Christen Burkhalter of Langnau at Langenegg.
 Christen Lüthi of Rüderswil at auf dem Kullm.
 Ulrich Gerber of Langnau at Kammershaus.
 Niklaus Gerber of Langnau at obern Hapbach.
 Michael Gerber of Langnau at auf der Hintern.
 Ulrich Blaser of Langnau at an der Lenggen.
 Michael Kipfer of Langnau at Schwarzentrub.
 Hans Kipfer of Langnau at auf der Bäregg.
 Ulrich Wiedmer of Langnau at auf Gumen.
 Hans Jakob of Langnau at beyr vor dem Hütten.
 Hans Ulrich Steffen of Trub at in der Bezeren.
 Niklaus Moser of Trub at im Klapschwand.
 Ulrich Künz of Trub at auf d. Schweli.
 David Steffen of Trub at Ramseyschachen.
 Niklaus Mosimann of Signau at Häleschwand.
 Hans Gerber of Langnau at Niedermoos.
 Peter Bürki of Langnau at Rindisbach.

Oberamt Thun.

Christian Ritschard of Oberhofen at Colombier.
 Jakob Stähli of Oberhofen in Canton Neuenburg.
 Jacob Stähli of Oberhofen at La Sagne.
 Christian Stähli of Oberhofen in Canton Neuenburg.
 Johannes Stähli of Oberhofen in Canton Neuenburg.
 Isaak Stähli of Oberhofen in Canton Neuenburg.
 Joseph Stähli of Oberhofen at La Sagne.
 Johannes Freyenberg of Oberhofen at St. Jakob near Basel.
 Christian Freyenberg of Oberhofen at Schapfheim, Baden.
 Johannes Freyenberg of Oberhofen at Schapfheim, Baden.
 Isaak Freyenberg of Oberhofen at Schapfheim, Baden.
 Christian Freyenberg of Oberhofen at Schapfheim, Baden.
 Christen Winteregg of Heiligenschwendi at Souboz.
 Abraham Winteregg of Heiligenschwendi at Traversberg, Canton Neuenburg.

Oberamt Trachselwald.

Peter Kohler of Lüzelfüh at im Eigen.
 Christian Kohler of Lüzelfüh at im Eigen.
 Christen Bichsel of Sumiswald at Ramisberg.
 Ulrich Reist of Sumiswald at Matstall.
 Hans Widmer of Sumiswald at Stegmatt.
 Hans Steiner of Trachselwald at Thal.
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